

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Photo by: Nate Limback

THE UNITED CHURCH OF LOS ALAMOS
2525 CANYON ROAD
LOS ALAMOS, NM 87544

THE 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

The United Church of Los Alamos

Senior Pastor	3
Pastor to Youth and Congregation	5
Director of Children's Ministries	6
Treasurer	8
Church Council President's Report	11
Church Membership Report	12
Church Attendance Report	13
In Memory	13
Church Staff Directory	14
The United Church of Los Alamos Board Members for 2023	14
Minutes of Congregational Meeting (January 29, 2023)	16
BOARD REPORTS	
Christian Education	18
Elders	21
Finance	23
Finance Board Report (Expenditure Budget Requests)	24
Budget Report	25
Designated and Restricted Funds	29
Balance Sheet	30
Annual Financial Review	31
2022-2023 Budget Summary	32
Membership and Evangelism	33
Missions and Service	35
Personnel	38
Trustees	39
COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS	
Endowment Fund and Memorials	41
Fellowship	43
Historical	44
Nominating	47
OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMITTEES	
Building Committee	48
Mexico Mission	49
Public Relations Committee	50
Women's Christian Service Society (WCSS)	51
WCSS Financial Report	52
WCSS Mission Budget Report	53
Thrift Shop	54
LIFT	56
Dignity Mission	57
Ushers	58

SENIOR PASTOR

David Elton

This past year offered us much to celebrate and be thankful for as we continue the ministries and mission work into this new year. One of those celebrations is the way the boards, committees and staff were intentional in planning and working on The United Church's "Church Growth Plan". Most of the meetings I attended throughout last year included discussions about growth.

The Executive Council asked each board to pay attention to ways each can foster growth in their particular area of ministry. The staff members have not only been a resource to the congregation in this endeavor, but have also been intentional in our planning during meetings and in our areas of work. While growth is more than new people or more people attending worship and programs, we believe that the ways faith is nurtured and lived out in this community should be shared. The United Church has a deep understanding and a wide-variety of ways of living out the good news that people need to hear and experience. And while we have more to do when it comes to growth, I do believe our work this past year has done more than plant seeds and will bear more fruit in this new year.

Another celebration to highlight is that more people seem to be involved in the life of the church in person. We will continue to provide and build upon our online opportunities for folks to participate, but it has been a joy to have more people join us in worship and classes in person, to have had more fellowship gatherings and potlucks, and to connect with each other face-to-face. Thank you to the Membership & Evangelism, Fellowship, and Christian Education boards, committee and friends for providing opportunities for us to gather together to connect, share, learn and serve. And thank you to the Board of Elders for their work in overseeing our worship, which includes preparing and serving Communion to the congregation. It's not coincidental that the word "Communion" is so closely related to "community"—as a community of faith in communion with God and each other.

The reports in this Annual Report give us an impressive picture of the faithful and hard work done by so many members, friends and staff of The United Church. Thank you to the leaders of our boards, committees and the Executive Council for your good and wise work. It was great to work with our President, Laura Erickson, throughout the year as she led us in overseeing the ministries. Thank you to each staff member for leading and being a resource to all the boards and ministries. It is a privilege to work with this talented and dedicated staff team. Thank you to all of the "friends" of boards and volunteers who make worship, classes, programs, mission outreach, the Thrift Shop, and

more, possible all fifty-two weeks of the year! I realize that this is hard work and more challenging some weeks due to travel, illness and fewer volunteers. When we talk about growth we are also focused on increasing volunteer participation. Nevertheless, I suspect the burdens that come with being a congregation with such vitality are also a source of joy and life for us.

This past (post-sabbatical) year for me was meaningful and inspiring. I enjoyed another year of working with your staff. This included serving with our Children's Ministry Director, Laura Loving, who began in December of 2022. At least a quarter of my time was spent each week on preparing worship and sermons throughout the year. I enjoyed teaching the "Ascents Psalms" class last spring (on Sunday and during the Thursday Lenten program) and the Galatians/James class in the fall. It was a privilege to be able to visit members, friends, relatives and neighbors in the hospital and in your homes. Even in the sadness, it was an honor to be with families in times of loss and to officiate the memorial and committal services.

Lori, Katherine and I are incredibly grateful for the support and prayers we received during and after Lori's surgery and recovery. As traumatic as it was, we felt a sense of peace and assurance throughout those long weeks thanks to your prayers and God's Spirit. We also enjoyed more than a few delicious home-delivered meals! Thank you!

All that we have done this past year, all that we hope to do this new year is possible because of the incredibly faithful giving of each of you. The United Church has an overall mission that continues to reach beyond the membership size of the congregation. This is both something to keep eye on from a financial/resources perspective, and something to celebrate! Thankfully, we have a vision for The United Church for 2024. I am excited about the impact the church will continue to have upon our lives, the greater community and well beyond because of your faithfulness to Christ's teachings and calling, and to God's provision and vision.

May this new year be filled with purpose, meaning and joy as we follow the life and ways of our Lord, sharing the love of God with the community and beyond.

In Christ,

David

PASTOR to YOUTH and CONGREGATION

Keith Lewis

Dear Friends....Finally, we were able to get to **Puerto Peñasco** for **Mexico Mission 2023!** Our group was small but hearty and we completed two houses. **All Church Camp** with Jeff Gill as speaker was well attended and is sowing seeds for church growth and Evangelism. **Donut Run** and **Sketchy Lunch** were in the mix over Spring and Fall terms. Even though our Donut Shop closed in the fall, we have served donuts out of our van to a large crew of kids. The mission of hospitality continues with the young people of Los Alamos and United Church's Mid/Sr High kiddos. On Tues for donuts we serve roughly 35 kids...for Sketchy Lunch on Thursday we serve roughly 50. Credibility where it counts and is needed the most. In October we were able to take a small crew of High School youth to **Gold Creek Colorado** (Roger and Betty Smith's lovely mountain spot) for a beautiful fall weekend of hiking and fishing. **Sunday School** activities ranged from exploring Bible topics, coffee and tea out as a group, bowling, writing and illustrating the Advent Booklet and packing the gifts for Truchas Pre-School.

2024 will hopefully continue to allow for professional development in Church Growth strategy, continued focus on Youth Ministry and work on my writing project "**Pillars of Hope in a Time of Despair.**" Fully staffed and moving forward, it is my hope and prayer that The United Church continues to be a beacon of light in this community and the world beyond our front doors. The work of those who have earned their eternal rest now sits upon our shoulders. My prayer is that we make every effort to fulfill the mission of our beloved church!

Respectfully,

Keith A. Lewis, Pastor to Youth and Congregation

DIRECTOR of CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

Laura Loving

The poet Billy Collins begins his poem “Nostalgia” with these lines:

*Remember the 1340's? We were doing a dance called the Catapult.
You always wore brown, the color craze of the decade,
and I was draped in one of those capes that were popular,
the ones with unicorns and pomegranates in needlework...
...Everything was hand-lettered then, not like today.*

Looking back, we see things through our current lens, maybe regretting, celebrating, vowing to do better or just looking with awe at what we considered to be normal “back in the day!” When I reflect on my first year at the United Church, I feel a sense of pride in our teaching team, gratitude for my clergy colleagues, and respect for the talented and committed community gathered here.

January kicked off with our Epiphany party, which made me eager to plan more intergenerational events—both for social and spiritual formation purposes. Other similar events under the Christian Education purview included participating in the interfaith Lenten programs—where I taught a group of children the Moses and Exodus stories--, Sunday evening Vacation Bible School in August covering stories from the Book of Acts, the All-Church Family Camp over Labor Day weekend at Ghost Ranch, the Fall Retreat at Sonlight Camp and the Advent Workshop. It’s important to me that our children feel at home in this congregation, loved, safe and surrounded by the adults. It’s also important to me to encourage childlike learning and wonder in adults, which can happen in these intergenerational settings. I like to recognize the rhythms of the church year and help to see that a life of faith may follow a countercultural calendar. We tried to plan events for youth and families to support mental health and wellness but did not attract a crowd. Similarly, we tabled plans for activities during school breaks, realizing that we didn’t have the people power or publicity needed to make them happen. We need to have investment and interest from the congregation rather than having these ideas as staff and trying to implement them. These were good lessons for me, as I tend to generate ideas without first getting a buy-in from those who might participate.

We do have talent and investment with our two regular Sunday School Bible Quest teachers, Carol Brown and Diana Little. With Nancy Bliss, Irene Powell, Norma Puckett and Quinn McCullough helping out as needed, we have a smart and strong adult presence. Our curriculum uses the resources of rotation.org, a group-sourced collection of hands-on workshops and lessons that delve into Bible stories for a month at a time. We believe that repetition and different learning styles contribute to better retention and attention. Our lessons included

Baptism and Jesus' baptism, Communion and the Last Supper, women of the final days of Jesus' ministry, the Lord's Prayer, Ruth, Daniel, David and Advent Angels and Shepherds. We sang songs, prayed together, learned songs to memorize the Books of the Bible and contributed to service projects (though I would like to do more outreach with the children in the future.) We have uneven attendance because of co-parenting schedules, travel and competing commitments. Our Bible Quest group ranges in numbers from two to eight, kindergarten through fifth grade. My goal is to increase regular participation. To be a part of the kids' growth in faith is a privilege. As they learn about Jesus, the Bible stories, and our Christian practices, they try on their own faith.

Another significant role for me is a regular presence with the kids in the Time for Children, where I like to familiarize them with worship practices, connections to the sermons and the Church seasons. I have also enjoyed other worship leadership responsibilities throughout the year.

Communication has been a priority in my ministry. I created and distributed a brochure about Children's Ministry, take-home packets for families, and regular emails to keep folks apprised of our progress and plans. I would love to be more of a support to families as they wrestle with today's issues and faith practices. The updated website and plans for more user-friendly features are key to attracting new families and keeping our current members informed, inspired, and interested in our various ministries. This is a work in progress!

For my own personal spiritual growth, I have participated in a Lectio Divina Bible study group at St. Bede's Episcopal church throughout the year and have led an ongoing women's spiritual connections group in Santa Fe. I have kept current with continuing education requirements of my ordination and learned a lot at the Annual General Synod meeting of the UCC last summer. I'm exploring the new literature and best practices for ministry--especially family ministries--to keep abreast of the many shifts in recent years.

We may long for the old days of hand lettering or old-fashioned dances, as Billy Collins alluded to in his poem, "Nostalgia." We may wax nostalgic for the days of brimming classrooms, children's choirs and thriving, week-long Vacation Bible School. But the church is evolving with current life landscapes. Our practices and expectations need to evolve as well. I'm honored to be a part of this collective growth as we seek to be faithful Christian disciples and bring justice and peace to the world through our children's spiritual maturation and our own actions. We will continue to think creatively about how best to serve our current needs and serve a world in need of the Good News.

TREASURER

Ann Cooke

Implementing growth ideas for the church was planned for this last year. Membership and Evangelism took charge and lead the way, updating and improving the church web site. Advertising through online sites, county historic designations, advertisements and traditional banners was given attention. The Trustees approved the addition of denomination symbols to the face of the Christian Education building which should be implemented early in 2024, with the hope of increasing identification of our ecumenical nature and the cohesiveness of the campus.

The Canyon Road retaining wall has progressed and while not yet finished has already attracted positive comments on the improvement to the church's first impressions. Lighting of the area is greatly anticipated to increase ease of use of the steps and parking at night, showcasing the Sanctuary, while minimizing light pollution. New signs are planned to introduce us to the visiting public, via a county sponsored walking path to and through the church campus. The county replaced a long out-of-service fire hydrant between the new retaining wall and the Montessori Entrance of the Christian Education Building. The Sanctuary, itself, is open to the public during business hours for visiting and viewing.

The Elders are discussing upgrades and improvements to the worship experience, while continuing well-loved traditions held by the church. Personnel has put attention to expanding our capabilities toward Christian education with children, and Christian Education is working at continuing education opportunities for all.

A comprehensive document of both existing and potentially new financial policies has progressed substantially this year. There are plans to share the document and make it easily accessible and more readable.

Landscaping is as follows: Weeding continues. This year an additional pallet of landscaping 'moss rock' was found to finish out the lining of flower/plant beds, primarily off Rose Street. Placement of the stone was started in the fall of 2023 and will continue as long as the stone stockpile lasts, in the areas off the playground and under the Ponderosa tree on Rose Street, and in the smaller beds along Rose Street sidewalk, and where the new Maple and Red Bud trees were placed. Deer, black bears, gophers, pack rats, ground squirrels and mice are still a problem around the entire campus. At best, we keep up with the depreciations caused by these critters.

In the coming year, it is anticipated that Rose Street will have major county renovations that may improve drainage off Rose Street as well as upgrade the old water mains in the street.

The ***Total Mission Giving*** is summarized below, by all the various efforts of those associated with the United Church. Unstated is that the Church still provides sermons, classes, fellowship, building space, columbarium, counseling, overflow parking, and beautiful grounds for the enjoyment of the community and members of the United Church of Los Alamos.

UCLA Mission Support	Source in 2023	Disburse 2023 (\$)	Disburse 2024(\$)	Recipients
Missions	Budget	81,000		Various – see Budget
Mission Contingency §	Budget	4,000		Dignity Mission – transferred
Mission Contingency	Budget	677		Moravian Visit
Mission Contingency	Budget	380		Bible Shipping
Mission Contingency	Budget	854		LA Cares – Christmas Meals
Mission Contingency	Budget	89		Correspondence Dinner
Denominational per Capita	Budget	6,000		Exec. Budget Line
WCSS Thrift Shop	Earned 2022	58,350		~ 30 NM Charities
WCSS Thrift Shop §	Earned 2022	1,000		Dignity Mission - Gift
NM Conference of Churches	Budget	1,500		Exec. Budget Line
Emergency Fund		2,324		Individual Short-Term Help
Souper Bowl	1,065	1,065		LA Cares
Change for Change	195	146	49	Syria/Turkey - Hawaii (\$49)
Dignity Mission §	Memorials	2,200		Hygiene Packages
Mexico Mission	34,264	32,021		Houses built in Mexico
Donut Run & Sketchy Lunch	Budget	3,938		Burritos & Pizza
Donut Run (Piece of the Pie)	Design. Gifts	2,587		Remaining 2022 Design. gifts
One Great Hour of Sharing	1,655	1,265	390	Church World Service
Monday Night @ Pit	Donated	-		Meals for students
Disaster Relief (Ukraine)	11,351	3,500	7,851	Mission Possible
Disaster Relief (Syria/Turkey)	5,905	5,905		Church World Service
Disaster Relief (Hawaii Fires)	3,550	3,550		Red Cross/Salvation Army
Other Designated Gifts	5,295	5,110	185	The Ranches/Truchas
Alternative Giving	9,850		9,850	Four Charitable Organizations
Xmas Eve Offering	254		254	LA Cares/Self Help
Totals		217,461	18,140	235,601
Expenses & All Mission Support				30.5% of 773,104
Total Budget Expenses				37.0% of 635,941
Non-Mission Budget Expenses	<i>Missions budget</i>	<i>(98,438)</i>		43.8% of 537,503

Bold amounts are counted Mission disbursements for the year just past. Unbold amounts may have been collected this last year, and partial payment made (**bold**), but the remainder to be paid out sometime in the future and

counted in the future at that time (e.g. Change for Change). The December collected Disaster Relief for Ukraine, Truchas gifts, Alternative Giving and Christmas Eve offering are counted as part of this last year's effort, though are slated to be paid out in 2024. All **bold** amounts sum to the **total bold** amount.

§ Dignity Mission was funded from Memorials, WCSS and Mission Contingency for a total of \$7,200 of which \$7,142 was used in 2023. The \$58 remaining will be credited to the Designated Mission unspent balance. *Monday Night @ the Pit runs on average 12 weeks serving 30-60 young adults, church members and friends. Teams of volunteers provided a meal that costs ~\$300, at least, in food. The total effort is minimally estimated at \$3,600 each summer.

Ann Cooke, Treasurer

CHURCH COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Laura Erickson

It has been a privilege to serve as your President this year! When I look out toward the pews (from my normal seat in the choir) I see so many people who share my passion for The United Church!

We share a passion for worshiping and learning about God through worship, music, classes, retreats, book studies. . .

We have a passion for sharing our faith journeys through fellowship - Coffee Hour, Men's Koffee Klatch, Lunch Bunch, and the return of church potlucks and other meals. . .

We share a passion for mission through our church mission budget, the Thrift Shop, special offerings, Dignity Mission, and Mexico Mission trips. . .

We share a passion for loving our neighbor through prayer, card ministry, LIFT, providing food and transportation as needed, sending care packages to our college students and military. . .

We have a desire to share the sense of family that we experience with others - through our re-vamped church website, Monday Night at the Pit, and bringing Laura Loving to join our staff and enhance our programs for Children and all ages!

It brings me joy to be part of this wonderful church family!

Blessings on you all,

Laura Erickson

"We take care of each other. That's what church is for!"

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP REPORT

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP as of January 1, 2023 239

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP (members of more than one church) (4)

Membership Additions

Confession of Faith (Uniting for the first time)	2
By Baptism	0
Discipleship Class	0
Letter of Transfer in	0
Reaffirmation	0
Non-resident/Inactive to Active status	<u>3</u>
Total Additions	5

Membership Losses

Active to non-resident/Inactive (due to relocation, corrections)	0
Active to resident/Inactive (request of removal from rolls)	0
Letter of Transferred out	0
Active Member Deaths	<u>6</u>
Total Losses	6

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP as of December 31, 2023 238

New Members

Liz Rodgers	Derrill Rodgers	

Baptisms

	None	
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SUNDAY MORNING IN-PERSON CHURCH ATTENDANCE FOR 2023

Monthly	January	91	July	83
Averages:	February	85	August	80
	March	90	September	93
	April	106	October	85
	May	82	November	90
	June	91	December	95

Average In-Person Attendance for the year of 2023 is 89.

Average In-Person Attendance for the year of 2022 was 79.

In Memory Of

Remembering our family and friends lost in 2023

Marjorie McInroy	January 07, 2023
Richard Swenson	January 27, 2023
Don Upham	February 01, 2023
Murlin Nutter	February 05, 2023
Charlie Bowman	April 03, 2023
Mary Lowe	April 06, 2023
Marie Andrew	July 30, 2023
Jack Gehre	August 08, 2023
Bernice Quinn	October 30, 2023
Ron Christman	November 23, 2023
Dan Rusthoi	December 2023

CHURCH STAFF DIRECTORY – 2023

Senior Pastor	Rev. David Elton
Pastor for Youth Ministries	Rev. Keith Lewis
Director of Christian Education	Rev. Kara Windler
Director of Music Ministries	Suzanne Johnson
Director of Children's Ministry	Rev. Laura Loving
Bookkeeper/Treasurer	Ann Cooke
Custodians	Cesar & Ana Maria Ojeda
Office Administrator & Director of Communications	Tjett Gerdorn
Nursery Coordinator	Julie Walker

BOARD & COMMITTEE MEMBERS – 2023

**(Co-)Chairperson*

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

President of the Church Council	Laura Erickson
Vice President of the Church Council	John Bliss
Past President of the Church Council	Jim Cobble
Member at Large of the Church Council	Patricia McCulloch
Member at Large of the Church Council	Chuck Tallman
Secretaries of the Church Council	Irene Powell
	Pam Meyer

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION BOARD

Anthony Puckett*
Carol Brown
Diana Little
Quinn McCulloch
Sheridan Smith
Kara Windler
Keith Lewis
Laura Loving

BOARD OF ELDERS

Brad Cooke*
Randy Erickson
Pamela Massey
Eric Bjorklund
Loree Lynch
LeAnn Purtzer
Larry Luck (Ex-Officio)

MEMBERSHIP & EVANGELISM BOARD

Georgia Strickfaden*
Nancy Bliss
Jan Taylor
Marie Michnovicz
Ginny White

FINANCE BOARD

John FitzPatrick*
Bob Weeks
Jeff Schroeder
Matt Michnovicz
Steve Stringer
Jeff Whicker
Ann Cooke

PERSONNEL BOARD

Roger Smith*
Cookie Halsted
Jerry Grindstaff
Chris Sierk
Vicki Cobble
Heath Watkins

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Eric Schmierer*
Norma Puckett
Clark de Nevers
Mark Strong
Brad Meyer

MISSION & SERVICE BOARD

John Puckett*
Oscar Sander
Kim Taylor
Larry Luck
Nancy Nunnelley (WCSS)
Jim Hogue
Ashley Reader
Nina Thayer
Gloria Gilmore-House

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Eric Schmierer*
Norma Puckett
Clark de Nevers
Mark Strong
Brad Meyer

LIFT COMMITTEE

Norma Puckett
Adda Moldt
Cookie Halsted

OTHER COMMITTEES AND GROUPS

A/V Booth
Columbarium
Dignity Mission
Fellowship
Historical
IT
Librarians
Public Relations
Thrift Shop

Umbrella
Ushering and Welcoming
W.C.S.S.

FLOWER COMMITTEE

Marie Michnovicz*
Irene Powell*
Ann Cooke
Nancy Nunnelley

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Anthony Puckett
Jim Cobble
Randy Erickson
John Charles
Georgia Strickfaden
Pamela Massey

**ENDOWMENT & MEMORIALS
COMMITTEE**

John Puckett*
Terry FitzPatrick
Jerry Grindstaff
Nancy Lemons

Milan Gadd
Elders & Trustees
Nina Thayer
Pam Meyer & Laura Erickson
Charmian Schaller
Beth Dermer, Roger Smith & Jack Carter
Jerry and Betsy Grindstaff
Georgia Strickfaden
Norma Puckett, Nina Thayer, Vicki Buley, Carol Brown,
Linda Hardie, Nancy Nunnelley, & Cheryl Warren
Irene Powell
Eric Bjorklund
Nancy Nunnelley

The United Church of Los Alamos
Annual Meeting of the Congregation
29 January 2023

Call to Order: Jim Cobble called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM.

Finances:

John Fitzpatrick said there was nothing to add but went on to explain some of the differences in last year's budget with this year's. John made a motion:

Motion to approve the budget for 2023 as presented in the report. No second required because motion came from church board. There was no discussion. Vote taken by show of hands, Motion passed unanimously.

Review of Annual Report for 2022:

Jim called on each Board asking if there was anything to add or change in the Annual Report for 2022. A chair-person or member responded: There were no changes in the Board reports.

Jim called on each Committee asking if there was anything to add or change in their reports. Only one committee had something to add or change, the other committee reports had nothing to add or change.

Public Relations Committee: Georgia Strickfaden made a correction on page 49, last paragraph, third line – change the word “charter” to “proclamation”.

Comments made:

Mexico Mission: Randy Erickson shared that there will be a Mexico Mission trip this year at spring break with plans to build 2 houses. At the first meeting last week about 30 people signed up. Sunday March 5 there will be a fundraising event.

WCSS: Normal Puckett shared that the Thrift Shop is always looking for volunteers. Thanked people for their clean donations.

Pastor:

David Elton thanked Jim Cobble for his service as President this past year and welcomed Laura Erickson as the in-coming president. David closed us in prayer.

Motion to Adjourn:

Milan Gadd made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Eric Schmierer. No discussion, no objection.

Adjournment: 11:29 pm.

Respectfully submitted by
Irene Powell
Ex. Council secretary

BOARD REPORTS

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION BOARD

The United Church Christian Education program had a nice full year of programming.

Children

In December 2022, we welcomed Laura Loving as the new Director of Children's ministry. She hit the ground running with the programming for a well-attended intergenerational Epiphany Party on January 8th and quickly came up to speed on the children's Sunday school workshop rotation model called Bible Quest. (Laura was more recently asked to write for the workshop rotation organization and Rotation Curriculum development.) The spring rotations of Bible Quest were focused on the sacraments, starting with Baptism for four weeks, followed by communion, and the women ministered to Jesus in his last days. In the Fall, the kids learned about Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz. The kids really enjoyed the activities, which included baking, choosing pictures how God might see us on the inside, singing songs, conducting science projects, and learning faith and courage. Exploration of Daniel and the Lion's Den and David finished out the year.

Other children's activities included One Great Hour of Sharing and Valentine's cards to shut-ins and members in the community.

Vacation Bible School was held over four Sunday evenings in August with the theme of Sunday Summer Nights. It was a gathering for all ages with learning activities for different age groups and food and fun for all. The learning activities were based on four different elements of the book of Acts and related to the release of movie Oppenheimer.

Youth

The Mid/Sr High ministry met in-person throughout the year. School started in early August, so programming started before Labor day. The weekday activities of "Donut Run" and "Sketchy Lunch" were in full swing reaching a broad population of church youth and their friends. Sunday school activities were shifted to a rotating structure with each Sunday of the month having a different focus/activity. The activities included service opportunities such as packing Dignity Kits to be sent down to the border, helping with the Souper bowl of caring that raised \$1100, and packing gifts for the Truchas Pre-School that were delivered by "Santa Claus".

The youth also enjoyed a number of activities outside of the church.

- Trips to Albuquerque and elsewhere for Laser Tag, bowling, paint ball
- Weekend retreat to the Smith's Cabin at Gold Creek,
- Sunday evening gathering around the fire pit.

Successful Mexico Mission trip in 2023. Good trip with no issues. Short week because Easter was on the second Sunday.

The United Church Recognized 5 graduating high school seniors in May: David Puckett, Heidi Sheppard, Elise Ovaska, Carter Watkins, and Megan Crawford.

Adult

In the Spring, there were two adult Sunday school classes. David Elton provided a recap of his sabbatical for all adults on January 8th and an introduction to the ascent Psalms. David continued to teach a class through most of the rest of semester on the ascent Psalms. The other spring class was a continuation from the Fall of a class, led by John Puckett, which was a review and discussion of the Great Courses video series of lectures "From Jesus to Constantine: A History of Early Christianity."

In addition, a Tuesday evening class was provided over Zoom by Kara Windler, and David Mutschlecner also led class in late May through June looking at "Spiritual Directions in English Language Poetry."

In the Fall there were two new Sunday school classes. Liz and Derrill Rodgers and Anthony Puckett led a class that watched the first season of The Chosen, and David Elton did a bible study on Galatians and James.

The Monday and Friday book groups continued throughout the year and looked at a number of books that included: "Who stole My Bible", "Dignity – The central role for resolving conflict", "Rescuing the Gospel from the Cowboys: A Native American Expression of the Jesus Way", "Enchantment: Awakening Wonder in an Anxious Age".

Other

All Church Camp was held at Ghost Ranch again in 2023. Jeff Gill, a writer, storyteller, and Disciples of Christ pastor & teacher, discussed the role of the church in our current time with an eye towards evangelism.

The Fall Retreat was held again at Sonlight Christian Camp with a program on hospitality led by Laura Loving .

Special thanks to the members of the CE board for all their hard work: Diana Little, Sheriden Smith, Quinn McCulloch, and Carol Brown. Also, thanks to Keith Lewis, Kara Windler, Laura Loving and David Elton for their spiritual leadership. Finally, thanks to all of those members of the United Church that help with all of the programming and classes that we are able to offer.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony Puckett
CE Board Chair

BOARD OF ELDERS

According to the United Church of Los Alamos constitution and bylaws, “The Elders shall assist the pastors in caring for the spiritual interest of the church.”

Communion is served the first Sunday of each month, and gluten free bread is the only bread that is offered. Early service has yet to be reinstated, but Derrill and Liz Rodgers have arranged to have Sangrey Chapple open at 8:30 Sunday mornings for prayers.

The sign-up board for Altar Flower Donations, Coffee Hosts, Liturgists, and Greeters is in service, though signup continues to be sparse. The congregation is encouraged to donate Sunday altar flowers as a memorial or celebration of a person or an event. Irene Powell and Marie Michnovicz shared coordinating duties and were supported by Nancy Nunnelley and Ann Cooke. The altar has continued to be beautifully decorated throughout the year.

YouTube broadcasting and live streaming have continued and is appreciated by those that either are more home bound or live at a distance. The Elders would like to recognize the dedicated service of Milan Gadd and all his Audio/Visual crew (Brad Meyer, Anthony Puckett, John Puckett, Joseph McCullough, and Quinn McCullough) in making these broadcasts and recording possible.

Other special services such as Maundy Thursday, Easter, Mother’s and Father’s Day, Outdoor Service, Independence Day Sunday, Anniversary/All Saints Day Sunday, Thanksgiving and Christmas Eve services were successfully accomplished, and members participated in the candle lighting for the Advent services. The handheld Christmas candles were also restocked this year and we hope to have a full house for Christmas Eve service. We also thank the many musical artists that contributed throughout the year to provide music during our services and especially during the Christmas Season!

Numerous cards and notes of sympathy, encouragement and congratulations to members and friends of the church, both near and far, continue to be sent by the good offices of Larry Luck. We know how much this ministry is valued by the letters of thanks we receive. “The Upper Room” devotionals are being picked up in the sanctuary and office again, and those that remain unused are passed on to the Board of Mission’s on-going collections for the Kairos Prison Ministry.

The Umbrella Ministry's has resumed bringing of a meal and scheduling ease has increased with the use of MealTrain.com, an online application that allows interested volunteers to sign up to bring a meal or provide help to those registered by Irene Powell as needing help. We appreciate the care of the members of the congregation who participate with us in this service.

The Elders would like to thank and recognize the dedicated volunteer service of Alison Griggs, who cares for the gardens in and around the Columbarium. She keeps the flowers blooming.

Respectfully submitted,

Brad Cooke, Chair
Eric Bjorklund,
Loree Lynch (moved),
LeAnn Purtzer
Pamela Massey
Randy Erickson (replaced Loree mid-year)

FINANCE BOARD

This past year, 2023, was a more normal year than the previous two years. The offering plates were once again passed in the services starting in the Spring. The board met in person most months except for July. Counters were present each Sunday with weekly deposits going to the bank. In order to balance the 2023 budget last year, ~\$44K was “borrowed” from the Operating Reserve. At the end of December 2023, there was a surplus of ~\$50K without using any of the “borrowed” money. Therefore the \$44K has been returned to the Operating Reserve Fund.

Early in the year with a major effort by Ann, a new version of the Financial Board Policies was published. This is not fully vetted yet and other changes may occur, but this is a big step toward having a guidebook for the Finance Board. It is comprised of a text section along with a section containing footnotes that explain the logic for the various actions that appear in the text section.

The Stewardship Drive began in September and culminated on Loyalty Sunday, November 12, 2023. This was a very successful drive with an increase in pledges of ~\$25,000. This increase will allow for small increases in the budget of the Mission and Service Board, the Christian Education Board and for Personnel to give a raise for both the staff and hourly employees. The Growth Task Force efforts will also continue in 2024. These expenditures are more fully outlined in the proposed 2024 budget and in the Treasurer’s Report.

Once again it should be noted that Ann Cooke, the UNCHLA Treasurer, has played a very important part in keeping track of both the income and expenses during the year. She has also helped the Board in developing the 2024 Budget.

2023 Finance Board

John FitzPatrick, Chair

Steve Stringer

Jeff Schroeder

Robert Weeks,

Matt Michnovicz, Secretary

Jeff Whicker

Ann Cooke, Treasurer

Finance Board Report

Annual Report for 2022

The following three tables compare the 2022 and 2023 expense budget requests, and the results of the two pledge drives.

Expense Budget Summary

Board		2022 Amount (\$)	2023 Amount (\$)	% Change
Executive		9,800.00	7,800.00	-20.4
Elders		4,100.00	3,000.00	-26.8
Music		10,950.00	10,950.00	0.0
Trustees		106,500.00	107,800.00	1.2
Christian Education		8,600.00	16,350.00	90.1
Finance		1,000.00	1,000.00	0.0
Membership & Evangelism		4,775.00	4,775.00	0.0
Missions		86,000.00	90,000.00	4.7
Personnel				
Salaries & Benefits		371,039.00	380,311.00	
Personnel Expenses		21,555.00	13,955.00	
Total		624,319.00	635,941.00	1.9

Distribution of Pledges for 2023

Average = \$5,425

Range (\$)	Number	Total	% of Total
1-999	11	\$5,985.00	1.3
1,000-1,999	14	\$17,640.00	3.8
2,000-2,999	11	\$25,370.00	5.5
3,000-3,999	9	\$29,920.00	6.5
4,000-4,999	4	\$17,330.00	3.8
5,000-5,999	3	\$16,220.00	3.5
6,000-6,999	7	\$43,756.00	9.5
7,000-9,999	11	\$91,020.00	19.7
10,000 >	15	\$213,904.00	46.4
TOTAL	85	\$461,145.00	100.0

Comparison of 2022 and 2023 Pledges

Category *		2023 Number	2022 Amount (\$)	2023 Amount (\$)
New		2		1,800
Increased		28	180,236	203,725
Constant		47	235,440	235,440
Decreased		8	23,660	20,180
Totals		85	439,336	461,145
Unconfirmed ‡	7	8%		25,950
Non - Pledgers ‡	48	56%		71,251
Estimated Upper Potential				532,396

* These category terms are defined as follows:

New are those that did not submit a pledge card the previous year, but have submitted one this year.

Increased are those that have increased their pledge from the previous year's pledge.

Constant are those that have submitted a pledge at the same level as their previous year's pledge.

Decreased are those that submitted a pledge that is less than their previous year's pledge.

Unconfirmed are those who gave Pledge gifts in the previous year, but have not returned a pledge card for the coming year.

Non-Pledgers have not returned a pledge card, but did give a gift the previous year, and may continue giving 'non-pledge' gifts.

‡ Percentage of total number of pledgers and of total amount which are unconfirmed or non-pledging.

1/6/2024

The United Church of Los Alamos

Annual Budget Report

January through December 2023

	Jan - Dec 23	Budget**	\$ Over Budget	% of Budget
Income				
92023 · Pledges-2023	498,466.89	461,145.00	37,321.89	108.09%
92022 · Pledges-2022	475.00	1,000.00	-525.00	47.50%
40000 · Interest/Dividends	20,237.82	20,000.00	237.82	101.19%
41010 · Plate	5,072.00	4,000.00	1,072.00	126.80%
41030 · Non-pledge income	75,178.18	71,000.00	4,178.18	105.89%
41040 · Bldg Usage Donations	21,942.00	20,000.00	1,942.00	109.71%
41810 · Church Growth Supplement	21,404.83	15,000.00	6,404.83	142.70%
41095 · Carryover used CFY	0.00	43,796.00	-43,796.00	0.00%
Total Income	642,776.72	635,941.00	6,835.72	101.08%
Expense				
50000 · Church Growth Efforts				
50010 · Christmas Eve Lights (Elders)	235.80	0.00	235.80	100.00%
50020 · Web Site Hosting (Trustees)	420.00	0.00	420.00	100.00%
50030 · Church School (CE)	5,461.53	5,000.00	461.53	109.23%
50060 · Web Page Development (M&E)				
50062 · Photograph (M&E)	1,525.00	0.00	1,525.00	100.00%
50060 · Web Page Development (M&E) - Otr	3,762.50	0.00	3,762.50	100.00%
Total 50060 · Web Page Development (M&E)	5,287.50	0.00	5,287.50	100.00%
50090 · Children's SS (Personnel)	10,000.00	10,000.00	0.00	100.00%
Total 50000 · Church Growth Efforts	21,404.83	15,000.00	6,404.83	142.70%
51000 · Executive Council				
51010 · Denominational Assessments	6,000.00	6,000.00	0.00	100.00%
51020 · Ecumenical Support	1,500.00	1,500.00	0.00	100.00%
51030 · Local Ecumenical Events	75.00	300.00	-225.00	25.00%
Total 51000 · Executive Council	7,575.00	7,800.00	-225.00	97.12%
51100 · Elders				
51110 · Service Communion Supplies	0.00	200.00	-200.00	0.00%
51115 · Special Services Supplies	184.49	300.00	-115.51	61.50%
51130 · Flowers	318.71	300.00	18.71	106.24%
51140 · Denominational Meetings	0.00	200.00	-200.00	0.00%
51155 · Pulpit Fill - Substitutes	80.00	800.00	-720.00	10.00%
51165 · Publications				
51167 · Card Ministry	347.87	800.00	-452.13	43.48%
51165 · Publications - Other	0.00	400.00	-400.00	0.00%
Total 51165 · Publications	347.87	1,200.00	-852.13	28.99%
Total 51100 · Elders	931.07	3,000.00	-2,068.93	31.04%
51180 · Music Board				
51184 · Music Purchased	0.00	250.00	-250.00	0.00%
51185 · Tuning and Maintenance	1,198.00	2,200.00	-1,002.00	54.46%
51187 · Organists/Accompanists	8,230.00	8,500.00	-270.00	96.82%
51180 · Music Board - Other	75.76			
Total 51180 · Music Board	9,503.76	10,950.00	-1,446.24	86.79%

** All budget figures are annual. 100% of the year is complete.

1/6/2024

The United Church of Los Alamos

Annual Budget Report

January through December 2023

	Jan - Dec 23	Budget**	\$ Over Budget	% of Budget
51200 · Trustees				
51210 · Office Supplies and Copier				
51211 · Postage	2,632.23	1,500.00	1,132.23	175.48%
51212 · Bulk Mail	1,090.00	1,000.00	90.00	109.00%
51213 · Office Supplies-General	3,273.59	3,300.00	-26.41	99.20%
51214 · Copier	8,346.71	8,000.00	346.71	104.33%
Total 51210 · Office Supplies and Copier	15,342.53	13,800.00	1,542.53	111.18%
51230 · Insurance	15,893.51	14,900.00	993.51	106.67%
51240 · Computers/Hardware	697.82	3,000.00	-2,302.18	23.26%
51245 · Software/Memberships	291.85			
51250 · Utilities	36,996.99	35,000.00	1,996.99	105.71%
51260 · Telephone	5,027.23	5,000.00	27.23	100.55%
51270 · Maintenance				
51271 · Church Vans	1,377.09	2,000.00	-622.91	68.86%
51272 · Snow Removal	3,047.16	3,500.00	-452.84	87.06%
51273 · Maintenance Services	12,011.43	12,100.00	-88.57	99.27%
51275 · Custodial Supplies	5,955.95	3,500.00	2,455.95	170.17%
51277 · Manse	95.35			
51270 · Maintenance - Other	7,958.78	15,000.00	-7,041.22	53.06%
Total 51270 · Maintenance	30,445.76	36,100.00	-5,654.24	84.34%
Total 51200 · Trustees	104,695.69	107,800.00	-3,104.31	97.12%
51300 · Christian Education		-5,000.00		
51305 · Nursery Operations	249.32	400.00	-150.68	62.33%
51310 · Child CS Operations	218.55	850.00	-631.45	25.71%
51315 · Children's Fellowship	0.00	500.00	-500.00	0.00%
51320 · Presentation Bibles	113.70			
51325 · Vacation Bible School	439.26	1,000.00	-560.74	43.93%
51330 · Intergenerational Programs				
51332 · Advent Workshop	285.04			
51330 · Intergenerational Programs - Other	81.72	150.00	-68.28	54.48%
Total 51330 · Intergenerational Programs	366.76	150.00	216.76	244.51%
51340 · Youth CS Operations	675.43	300.00	375.43	225.14%
51350 · Mid/Sr-High Program *	-2,587.47			
51351 · Tues. Breakfast	2,658.41			
51353 · Thurs Pizza	3,867.23			
51354 · Sunday Fellowship	842.27			
Total 51350 · Mid/Sr-High Program	4,780.44	5,000.00	-219.56	95.61%
51367 · College/Young Adult Ministries	37.75	100.00	-62.25	37.75%
51370 · Adult Programs	-5,000.00			
51371 · Curriculum	315.38	600.00	-284.62	52.56%
51373 · Women's Retreat	532.85	200.00	332.85	266.43%
51374 · Women's Retreat Honorarium	450.00	450.00	0.00	100.00%
51376 · Book Group Moderator	14,900.00	5,000.00	9,900.00	298.00%
Total 51370 · Adult Programs	11,198.23	6,250.00	4,948.23	179.17%
51390 · Library	32.90	200.00	-167.10	16.45%
51395 · All Church Camp	1,593.42	400.00	1,193.42	398.36%
51396 · ACC-Honoraria	1,000.00	1,200.00	-200.00	83.33%
Total 51300 · Christian Education	20,705.76	11,350.00	9,355.76	182.43%

* At the end of Spring Semester the remaining \$2,587.47 of previous year's Sketchy Lunch gifts were applied.

1/6/2024

The United Church of Los Alamos

Annual Budget Report

January through December 2023

	Jan - Dec 23	Budget**	\$ Over Budget	% of Budget
51400 · Finance				
51440 · Financial Review (Auditing)	0.00	400.00	-400.00	0.00%
51450 · Eoffering Fees	551.07	600.00	-48.93	91.85%
Total 51400 · Finance	551.07	1,000.00	-448.93	55.11%
51600 · Membership and Evangelism				
51610 · Fellowship				
51615 · MN@P Reimbursements	-532.52			
51610 · Fellowship - Other	616.24	1,625.00	-1,008.76	37.92%
Total 51610 · Fellowship	83.72	1,625.00	-1,541.28	5.15%
51620 · New Members/Discipleship	207.82	200.00	7.82	103.91%
51640 · Outreach/Publicity	656.34	2,750.00	-2,093.66	23.87%
51670 · Usher/Greeter/Sanct Supplies	66.83	200.00	-133.17	33.42%
Total 51600 · Membership and Evangelism	1,014.71	4,775.00	-3,760.29	21.25%
51800 · Missions				
51810 · Denominational Missions Support	12,000.00	12,000.00	0.00	100.00%
51820 · World and National Missions	21,000.00	24,000.00	-3,000.00	87.50%
51830 · Direct Missionary Support	24,000.00	24,000.00	0.00	100.00%
51850 · New Mexico Missions	24,000.00	24,000.00	0.00	100.00%
51880 · Mission Contingency Fund	5,999.97	6,000.00	-0.03	100.00%
Total 51800 · Missions	86,999.97	90,000.00	-3,000.03	96.67%
51900 · Personnel Salaries	-10,000.00	-10,000.00		
51901 · Program Staff Salaries				
51902 · Pastor Salary	64,085.00	64,085.00	0.00	100.00%
51904 · Pastor Youth Min. Salary	46,531.00	46,531.00	0.00	100.00%
51905 · Music Min. Salary	30,623.00	30,623.00	0.00	100.00%
Total 51901 · Program Staff Salaries	141,239.00	141,239.00	0.00	100.00%
51910 · Housing and Utility Allowances				
51912 · Pastor Utility Allowance	2,548.66	2,500.00	48.66	101.95%
51914 · Pastor Youth Min. HA	23,149.00	23,149.00	0.00	100.00%
51916 · Pastor Children's Min. HA	22,000.00	22,000.00	0.00	100.00%
Total 51910 · Housing and Utility Allowances	47,697.66	47,649.00	48.66	100.10%
51920 · Support Staff Salaries				
51921 · Custodian Wages	39,572.00	39,771.00	-199.00	99.50%
51924 · Office Administrator	41,889.62	42,128.00	-238.38	99.43%
51925 · Treasurer Salary	17,883.00	17,883.00	0.00	100.00%
51927 · Contingency	0.00	1,000.00	-1,000.00	0.00%
Total 51920 · Support Staff Salaries	99,344.62	100,782.00	-1,437.38	98.57%
51930 · Summer Staff	0.00	1,600.00	-1,600.00	0.00%
51935 · Nursery Workers				
51938 · Other Child Care	1,969.20	2,671.00	-701.80	73.73%
51939 · Nursery Coordinator	4,361.26	3,515.00	846.26	124.08%
Total 51935 · Nursery Workers	6,330.46	6,186.00	144.46	102.34%
51945 · Casual Exempt Workers	0.00	800.00	-800.00	0.00%

1/6/2024

The United Church of Los Alamos

Annual Budget Report

January through December 2023

	Jan - Dec 23	Budget**	\$ Over Budget	% of Budget
51950 · Retirement				
51952 · Pastor Retirement	7,053.33	9,063.00	-2,009.67	77.83%
51954 · Pastor Youth Min. Retirement	5,966.87	6,968.00	-1,001.13	85.63%
51955 · Music Ministry Retir.	2,143.52	2,144.00	-0.48	99.98%
51957 · Custodian Retirement	2,770.08	2,784.00	-13.92	99.50%
51958 · Office Administrator Retirement	2,932.26	2,949.00	-16.74	99.43%
51959 · Treasurer Retirement	1,251.77	1,252.00	-0.23	99.98%
Total 51950 · Retirement	22,117.83	25,160.00	-3,042.17	87.91%
51960 · Medical & DD Insurance				
51962 · Pastor Medical	26,914.51	26,920.00	-5.49	99.98%
51964 · Pastor Youth Min. Medical	12,067.62	11,712.00	355.62	103.04%
51965 · Office Admin Medical	6,941.19	6,855.00	86.19	101.26%
Total 51960 · Medical & DD Insurance	45,923.32	45,487.00	436.32	100.96%
51968 · Personnel Contingency Expenses	232.87			
51969 · Payroll Taxes	10,276.15	11,408.00	-1,131.85	90.08%
Total 51900 · Personnel Salaries	363,161.91	370,311.00	-7,149.09	98.07%
51970 · Personnel Expenses				
51971 · Continuing Education				
51972 · Pastor Cont. Ed	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00	100.00%
51974 · Pastor Youth Min. Cont. Ed	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00	100.00%
51975 · Music Minister Cont. Ed	715.00	715.00	0.00	100.00%
51976 · Children's Min. Cont. Ed	800.00	800.00	0.00	100.00%
Total 51971 · Continuing Education	5,515.00	5,515.00	0.00	100.00%
51981 · Professional Expense				
51982 · Pastor Prof. Exp.	1,475.64	1,500.00	-24.36	98.38%
51984 · Pastor Youth Min. Prof. Exp.	600.00	600.00	0.00	100.00%
51985 · Music Min. Prof. Exp.	491.46	500.00	-8.54	98.29%
51986 · Children's Min. Prof. Exp.	300.00	300.00	0.00	100.00%
Total 51981 · Professional Expense	2,867.10	2,900.00	-32.90	98.87%
51991 · Travel				
51992 · Pastor Travel	1,972.18	1,980.00	-7.82	99.61%
51994 · Pastor Youth Min. Travel	1,526.02	1,600.00	-73.98	95.38%
51995 · Music Min. Travel	621.77	660.00	-38.23	94.21%
51996 · Children's Min. Travel	400.00	600.00	-200.00	66.67%
Total 51991 · Travel	4,519.97	4,840.00	-320.03	93.39%
51999 · Staff Development	1,316.10	700.00	616.10	188.01%
Total 51970 · Personnel Expenses	14,218.17	13,955.00	263.17	101.89%
Total Expense	630,761.94	635,941.00	-5,179.06	99.19%
Net Surplus	12,014.78			

1/5/2024

The United Church of Los Alamos

Designated and Restricted Funds

Annual Report 2023

	BALANCE 1/1/2023	CURR.MON. RECEIPTS	RECEIPTS YR-TO-DATE	CURR.MON. DISBRSMNTS	DISBRSMNTS YR-TO-DATE	CURR.FUND TRANSFER	FUND TRANS. YR-TO-DATE	BALANCE END OF MONTH
DESIGNATED FUNDS:								
Outside Speaker (CE & Elders)	8,297.31	-	-	-	-	-	-	8,297.31
Youth Sch. Fund (CE)	1,774.08	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,774.08
Women's Retreat Sch. Fd. (CE)	1,390.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,390.00
Mex. Miss. Trip (CE)	25,684.86	-	17,988.00	-	32,020.57	-	-	11,652.29
Mex. Miss. Auction(CE)	(4,637.89)	-	-	-	-	-	4,637.89	-
Mex. Miss. Donations (CE)	22,583.34	500.00	16,275.56	-	-	-	(4,637.89)	34,221.01
Organ/Music (Elders)	13,208.52	-	-	-	585.00	-	-	12,623.52
Designated Gifts § (Finance)	4,592.04	-	3,650.00	400.00	6,769.30	-	-	1,472.74
Designated Missions (Missions)	13,437.00	16,852.70	42,913.82	4,202.95	38,902.64	-	2,200.00	19,648.18
General Memorials (Memorials)	15,679.39	1,700.00	3,363.95	(400.00)	6,812.29	(1,000.00)	(3,220.00)	9,011.05
Capital Improvements (Trustees)	3,459.78	-	-	-	750.00	-	-	2,709.78
Emergency Fund	3,900.25	500.00	500.00	-	2,324.27	-	-	2,075.98
Pastor's Fund	19.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	19.00
Continuing Education Funds								
- Pastor	3,037.82	-	-	1,705.64	1,705.64	-	-	1,332.18
- Dir. of Youth Ministries	1,180.82	-	-	1,114.15	1,114.15	-	-	66.67
- Dir. of Children's Ministries	-	112.98	112.98	-	-	-	-	112.98
- Dir. of Music Min.	2,145.00	-	-	151.83	151.83	-	-	1,993.17
Amortized previous year Prepd Pledges	72,500.00	-	-	6,041.74	72,500.00	-	-	(0.00)
Collected Prepd Pledges for next year	-	47,325.00	70,125.00	-	-	-	-	70,125.00
Reserve for current year budget	-	43,796.00	87,592.00	2,816.35	43,796.00	-	-	43,796.00
Operating Reserve*	401,502.08	-	5,694.93	-	7,124.36	-	(43,796.00)	356,276.65
Church Growth (Exec/Finance)	-	-	30,000.00	-	21,404.83	-	-	8,595.17
Estate Gifts (Finance/Exec)	278,590.10	-	-	-	16,394.72	-	(30,000.00)	232,195.38
Holding Account	-	-	550.00	-	550.00	-	-	-
TOTAL DESIGNATED FUNDS	868,343.50	110,786.68	278,766.24	16,032.66	252,905.60	(1,000.00)	(74,816.00)	819,388.14
RESTRICTED FUNDS:								
COLUMBARIUM FUND	21,235.05	-	1,700.00	-	2,706.29	-	20.00	20,270.39
Interest (or Realized Gain)		1.72	21.63	-	-	-	-	
PRITCHARD MEMORIAL FUND	27,810.47	-	-	-	-	-	-	28,730.68
Interest (or Realized Gain)		433.14	920.21	-	-	-	-	
REGULAR ENDOWMENT FUND	823,425.96	-	-	-	-	1,000.00	1,000.00	849,040.38
Interest (or Realized Gain)		11,587.10	24,614.42	-	-	-	-	
TOTAL RESTRICTED FUNDS	872,471.48	12,021.96	27,256.26	-	2,706.29	1,000.00	1,020.00	898,041.45

Quarter ending 12/31/2023

Unrealized Gain on Church held Mutual Fds	\$58,358.92
Balanced Growth fund trading @	\$114.50

PRITCHARD MEM. MUTUAL FD

Market Value (357.038 shares)	\$ 40,880.85
Unrealized Gain	\$ 12,583.31
Cost/Book Value	\$ 28,297.54

COLUMBARIUM DETAIL

49500 Columbarium Gifts	\$ 156,930.04
49501 Columbarium Interest	1,400.96
49600 Columbarium niche sales	74,100.00
59500 Expenses	(212,160.61)
Columbarium balance	\$ 20,270.39

REGULAR ENDOW. MUTUAL FD

Market Value (9558.328 shares)	\$ 1,094,428.57
Unrealized Gain	\$ 257,975.29
Cost/Book Value	\$ 836,453.28

* Church held Balanced Income Funds were redeemed for a \$7,124.36 loss

Since the accrued interest and dividends over the years is consolidated into the Operating Reserve, the loss has been charged to the Operating Reserve.

§ Contribution from Church to Cesar's Love Gift originally charged to Memorials and latter charged from excess of Designated Gifts

01/11/24

United Church of Los Alamos

Balance Sheet

As of December 31, 2023

	Dec 31, 23
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
Enterprise Bank and Trust	122,406.37
Columbarium - Building Fund	20,270.39
Savings - Bldg Fd	9,548.42
MyEoffering	9,606.01
Fidelity-MM	184,878.00
New Cov. Bal. Growth-Gen. Fd	442,584.11
New Cov. Bal. Income-Gen. Fd	62,654.53
New Cov. - Endow. & Pritchard	877,771.06
Total Checking/Savings	1,729,718.89
Total Current Assets	1,729,718.89
Fixed Assets	
Campus Land Improvements	
Accumulated Depreciation	-144,085.37
Campus Land Improvements - Other	689,353.38
Total Campus Land Improvements	545,268.01
Christian Education Building	2,859,691.62
Columbarium	153,823.71
Craig Hall	334,310.08
Furniture and Equipment	
Accumulated Depreciation	-395,075.84
Furniture and Equipment - Other	788,061.78
Total Furniture and Equipment	392,985.94
Land	2,350,000.00
Manse	415,695.65
Sanctuary Building	2,622,865.11
Total Fixed Assets	9,674,640.12
TOTAL ASSETS	11,404,359.01
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Credit Cards	
VISA - 6350- Tjett	274.52
Total Credit Cards	274.52
Total Current Liabilities	274.52
Total Liabilities	274.52
Equity	
31000 · General Fund Balance	23,385.39
32000 · Designated Fund Balance	819,388.14
33000 · Restricted Fund Balance	898,041.45
34000 · Plant Asset Fund Balance	9,674,640.12
Net Income	-11,370.61
Total Equity	11,404,084.49
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	11,404,359.01

+ 12,014.78 ✓

BALANCE SHEET, December 31, 2023

ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS

Cash and cash equivalents		\$	346,435	
Mutual fund securities, at market value (1); cost=	\$505,239		<u>653,668</u>	\$ 1,000,103

PLANT ASSETS (2)

Buildings (Sanctuary, Christian Education, Craig Hall & Manse)		\$	6,232,562	
Columbarium			153,824	
Land			2,350,000	
Furniture & Equipment			788,062	
Depreciation @ 7% annually			(395,076)	
Campus Land Improvements			689,353	
Depreciation @ 4% annually			<u>(144,085)</u>	\$ 9,674,640

RESTRICTED ASSETS

Endowment investments, at market value (1); cost =	\$877,771		<u>1,135,309</u>	\$ 1,135,309
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TOTAL ASSETS

				<u>\$ 11,810,052</u>
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Total Current plus Restricted Assets = \$ 2,135,412

FUND BALANCES

UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

Surplus or (Loss)			<u>12,015</u>	\$ 12,015
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FUNDS INVESTED IN PLANT ASSETS

\$ 9,674,640

DESIGNATED FUNDS

		\$	819,388	
Unrealized holding gain/(loss) on mutual fund securities (1)			<u>148,429</u>	\$ 967,817

RESTRICTED FUNDS

		\$	898,041	
Unrealized holding gain/(loss) on endowment investments (1)			<u>257,538</u>	\$ 1,155,580

TOTAL FUND BALANCES

\$ 11,810,052

(1) Investments are carried at cost and reported at market value. Unrealized gain/(loss) is the difference between the cost and market

(2) Plant assets have been capitalized and a simple depreciation schedule implemented.

Financial Review for the Calendar Year 2023

Finance Board members review the Monthly Budget Report on a rotating schedule, and examine the reconciliations and balance sheet for inconsistencies or errors as the budget report is produced each month.

As always, if anyone is interested in examining the financial records of the church, please let the Finance board know, and we will make the records available for review.

2022 - 2023 Budget Summary Comparison

Expense	2022 Budget	2023 Budget	Change	
Executive	9,800	7,800	-2,000	-20.4%
Elders	4,100	3,000	-1,100	-26.8%
Music Board	10,950	10,950	0	0.0%
Trustees	106,500	107,800	1,300	1.2%
Christian Education	8,600	16,350	7,750	90.1%
Finance	1,000	1,000	0	0.0%
Membership and Evangelism	4,775	4,775	0	0.0%
	145,725	151,675	5,950	4.1%
Missions	86,000	90,000	4,000	4.7%
Personnel Board				
Senior Pastor Salary	61,033	64,085	3,052	5.0%
Other salaries/wages	190,488	186,522	-3,966	-2.1%
Housing and Utility Allowances	42,854	47,649	4,795	11.2%
Retirement	27,193	25,160	-2,033	-7.5%
Medical & DD Insurance	38,593	45,487	6,894	17.9%
Payroll Taxes	10,878	11,408	530	4.9%
Continuing Education	5,915	5,515	-400	-6.8%
Professional Expense	2,900	2,900	0	0.0%
Travel	5,040	4,840	-200	-4.0%
Staff Support for Sabbatical *	7,000	0	-7,000	
Staff Development	700	700	0	0.0%
	392,594	394,266	1,672	0.4%
Total Expense	624,319	635,941	11,622	1.9%
Income				
Pledges	474,826	461,145	-13,681	-2.9%
Postpaid Pledges	1,000	1,000	0	0.0%
Non-pledge income	75,000	71,000	-4,000	-5.3%
Plate	2,000	4,000	2,000	
Building Usage Donations	21,000	20,000	-1,000	-4.8%
Support for Church Growth		15,000	15,000	
Interest/Dividends	20,000	20,000	0	0.0%
Total Income	593,826	592,145	-1,681	-0.3%
Anticipated shortfall	-\$30,493	-\$43,796	13,303	
			Increase in deficit spending.	
Actual 2022 Surplus =	\$5,694.93			

* David Elton's sabbatical in 2022 is complete, and funding spread through various boards (Executive, Elders, & Personnel) for the sabbatical is reduced. In Executive funds for 2022's 75th Anniversary of the Church are removed for 2023. In Personnel the net increase is relatively small, but Director of Christian Education resigned in 2022, a Director of Children's Ministry was hired at the end of 2022. Funds to support additional Pastoral care while David was on sabbatical were reduced, but an overall 5% increase of salaries, housing, retirement, and an even larger increase (~15%) for health care and Pension costs, exceeded any reduced costs. Further, Christian Education was additionally financed to support true costs of Mid/Sr Hi program and continue added costs of Adult program leadership.

MEMBERSHIP and EVANGELISM BOARD

The Membership and Evangelism Board organized our work for the year guided by the recommendations set forth in the *Church Growth Plan*.

Fostering fellowship within the congregation has always been an important part of M&E's work, but in order to pay better attention to other outreach activities, we have partnered for "event planning" with the Fellowship Committee. M&E member Jan Taylor acted as liaison to the Fellowship Committee.

The major **meal-related events and outreach** included:

- Monday Night at the Pit—meals and volleyball targeting LANL summer interns, grad students and the like every summer Monday, June, July, and part of August. Phenomenal United Church teams again stepped up to provide "tail-gate"-type meals that served an average of 60 people each Monday at the Volleyball Pit. Jim Cobble continues to be a key player in this outreach, befriending and keeping up with a number of the students from the first time they ever attended MN@tP. A number of those students are now full time LANL staff living in the Los Alamos area. A few attend church services and activities, and they continue to attend the summer MN@tP. As an outgrowth of this, M&E sponsors in Graves Hall fortnightly meal gatherings for Young Adults (for lack of a better designation at this point), attended by 10-16 YAs enjoying each other's company. Around 8 or 9 church folks, including pastors, with a heart for this missing age group in our congregation provide the meals. We look for this to continue evolving at least through the spring of 2024.
- Easter morning breakfast burritos served on the Church Plaza after church service continue to be a well-received all-church gathering, jointly prepared by the Fellowship Committee and M&E.
- The Sunday before Thanksgiving, Pie on the Plaza turned into Pie in Fellowship Hall due to a sudden onset of really cold and wet weather.
- The June outdoor service was followed by the Church Picnic. M&E again

partnered with Fellowship Committee to provide the organization and cookout for the picnic.

Website refurbishment:

In May, M&E, along with Director of Children's Ministries Laura Loving and the Christian Education Board, took action toward updating and refurbishing the church website, a major need for improving the outreach and noticeability of The United Church and our ministries. M&E member Marie Michnovicz made contact with web designer Elicia Wetstein who provided a quote and description for what work she would provide for the church. With the go-ahead from the Executive Council and funding from the Church Growth Fund, The United Church Website Team had a Zoom meeting with Elicia, who organized the work we would need to do on our end, so that she could help us with the refurbishment. Concentrated work moved along quickly and by the beginning of August the refurbished design went live.

In October, M&E headed up the **United Cares Boxes** for our college students and active military. A box for each individual was put out at the back of the Sanctuary to be filled with edibles and sundries to delight students away from home, and then shipped by mail to the recipients in early November. Thanks to the amazing Jan and Kim Taylor who took on this project start to finish. Thank you notes show gratitude for their church's thoughtfulness.

Other activities of the board involved writing notes of encouragement or recognition to church folks on behalf of their church family; church signage studies in conjunction with the Trustees; receiving new members; and Pastor Keith's new Visitor Care Team. The entire board met with Office Administrator Tjett Gerdson to better understand the ServantKeeper program used for tracking church members and visitors, leading to making available an updated Church Directory.

As chair of M&E this year, I thank everyone of the board members for their enthusiastic participation in growing the United Church.
Nancy Bliss, Marie Michnovicz, Jan Taylor, Ginny White, and Pastor Keith Lewis.

Signed, Georgia Strickfaden, chair

MISSIONS and SERVICE BOARD

The Board met 10 times in 2023. At the January meeting we added the Dignity Mission to our list of New Mexico Missions. It was jointly funded by the Missions Board (contingency funds), WCSS Thrift Shop and Memorials. In the periodic review of our missions, we planned to review four missions: Four Corners Home for Children, Dignity Mission, Kids Alive and Augusta Victoria Hospital. The first three were successfully reviewed and scored. Augusta Victoria Hospital located in the West Bank of the Middle East, never responded to our request for review. We tried many means to communicate and finally found a connection through a Lutheran Church in Maryland in December. The Board was very concerned about sending the 2023 check due to this lack of definitive communication with the charity. The board voted not to send a contribution in 2023 and can reconsider in 2024.

During the year the board asked the congregation to consider special contributions through Church World Service for the devastating earthquakes in Syria and Turkey, through Mission Possible to support children and families in Ukraine, and through the Salvation Army and Red Cross following the fire on Maui Island, Hawaii. These latter contributions were sent directly to respective offices in Hawaii. Change for change was added to these disaster contributions. For alternative giving this year, the board chose four special charities: MAP International, World Vision, Reece's Rainbow and Sonlight Camp.

The United Church, the Unitarian Church, the White Rock Presbyterian Church, the Pajarito Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and the Los Alamos Jewish Center collaborated in a drive to raise food, clothing, toiletries, children's art supplies, and financial support for the work with asylum seekers of Colores United, in Deming, New Mexico. We used our church parking lot as the drop off place. Community members donated, among other things, over 60 boxes of clothing to the drive. The organizers of the drive are very grateful to the community for such a high level of support. All of these boxes and cash contributions have been delivered to Colores United.

As we move into 2024, the board is concerned about the number of missions we support. The total number is now 22, plus a mission donation to each of our six denominations, on basically a flat budget. This means all the missions are not receiving any increase due to inflation. In addition, the review process, which assures we are giving our mission dollars effectively, becomes an overwhelming task, even on three year cycle. Therefore, for 2024, we have decided to drop Church World Service (CWS) as a regular and continue to use it for special donations associated with special events and disasters. CWS include about 35 Christian members from protestant, catholic and orthodox

churches and organizations. CWS receives our One Great Hour of Sharing funds each year.

Total contributions to each mission and all special gifts are shown on the Mission Board's financial page.

Member Jim Hogue, who served as the secretary, and Nancy Nunnelley (WCSS rep) will be leaving the board, and we thank them for their service on the board.

Respectively Submitted:

John Puckett, Kim Taylor, Larry Luck, Nina Thayer, Oscar Sander, Jim Hogue, Ashley Reader, and Nancy Nunnelley (WCSS Rep.)

Missions	Score	Correspondent	2023 (\$)	2024 (\$)
American Baptist Church (USA)			2,000	2,100
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)			2,000	2,100
Moravian Church			2,000	2,100
Presbyterian Church USA			2,000	2,100
Reformed Church in America			2,000	2,100
United Church of Christ			2,000	2,100
subtotal Denominational Missions			12,000	12,600
Church World Service (CWS)	0.00	Kim Taylor	2,670	0
Emmaus/Bethania High School, Palau	1.03	Irene Powell	3,030	3,210
Kenya: Burke-Kibwezi Partnership	1.11	Nancy Nunnolley	3,250	3,430
Mission Possible	0.97	Gloria Gilmore House	2,840	3,000
Near East School of Theology	0.91	Bob Little	2,670	2,820
Widows' Friend (Friends of Bangladesh)	1.20	Alice Mutschlecner	3,540	3,730
Agusta Victoria Hospital**	1.04	Oscar Sander	3,000	0
Kids Alive	1.23	Larry Luck	3,000	3,810
subtotal World & National Missions			24,000	20,000
Carol & Leith Fujii	1.23	Alice Mutschlecner	4,730	4,930
Land of the Living, South Africa: Scott Worley	0.97	Chris Worley	3,750	3,550
International(Congo): Wayne & Katherine Niles	0.89	Beth Johnson	3,410	4,340
Metal Health: Lyn Westman	1.08	Betty Nance Smith	4,160	4,340
South Africa: Stephen Zimmerman	1.08	Georgia Strickfaden	4,160	3,940
Wycliffe Bible: Louis & Karen Rose	0.98	Betty Nance Smith	3,790	3,900
§ subtotal Direct Missionary Support			24,000	25,000
Group Home Development	0.76	Norma Puckett	2,540	2,570
Kairos New Mexico	1.08	Jim Hogue	3,600	3,640
LA Cares	0.86	Gary Thayer	2,870	2,920
La Jicarita Cluster	0.98	Doris Ford & Jack Carter	2,620	3,310
Los Alamos Young Life	0.81	Irene Powell	2,700	2,730
4 Corners home for Children	0.98	Liz Rodgers	3,280	3,310
The Ranches (NM Boys & Girls)	0.98	Georgia Strickfaden	3,280	3,310
Truchas Pre-School	0.93	TBD	3,110	3,150
Dignity Mission (New in 2023, used contingency funds)	0.91	Nina Thayer	4,000	3,060
subtotal New Mexico Missions			28,000	28,000
Contingency and Service Fund (All used in 2023)			2,000	6,400
subtotal Contingency				6,400
BUDGET TOTAL			\$ 90,000	92,000

**Due to the board's inability to find a direct communication link to this mission, the budgeted funds were not sent.
The board will continue to review this mission in 2024 and if funded, will use contingency funds.

Designated Mission Gifts	Received	Paid in 2023
Change for Change, Church World Service - Syria/Turkey Earthquake	146	✓
One Great Hour of Sharing - Church World Service	1,355	✓
Disaster Relief - Mission Possible - Ukraine	11,890	✓
Disaster Relief - Church World Service - Syria/Turkey Earthquake	5,905	✓
Disaster Relief - American Red Cross - Hawaii Fires	1,775	✓
Disaster Relief - Salvation Army - Hawaii Fires	1,775	✓
Truchas Day Care - Remainder 2022	351	✓
Truchas Day Care - Remainder 2023	185	
The Ranches - Memory of Heath Kull	5,110	✓
Disaster Relief - Mission Possible - Ukraine	7,851	
One Great Hour of Sharing - Church World Service	390	
Change for Change - Hawaii Fires 50/50 distribution	49	
Alternative Giving (2023)		
MAP International	2,880	
World Vision	2,545	
Reece's Rainbow	2,230	
Sonlight Camp	2,195	
Christmas Eve Offering: LA Cares/Self Help	254	
MISSIONS TOTALS for 2023	\$ 133,885	

PERSONNEL BOARD

Most of the Personnel Board discussions are confidential and cannot be shared, so this report will be brief. The work this board has done, at times, has been difficult, but with wisdom, patience and faith, issues were (mostly) resolved. We did have ongoing discussions of contracts, sabbaticals, vacations & holidays. (Is Juneteenth a holiday with time off, paid or not?) Staff evaluations were performed. The Board is very pleased with our church staff and the work they perform for us. The Church annual budget is always a major discussion.

I am leaving the Personnel Board and want to thank all on the board and staff for their thoughtfulness, insights, wisdom, support and especially faith in me and the church.

Christ be with you all,

Roger Smith
Personnel Board Chair

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Trustees continue to meet the second Saturday of each month or the day before the Executive Council meets. Special thanks to Norma Puckett who co-chaired the Trustees and was Secretary. Special thanks to the Meyers and others for serving as Alternate Secretaries. Special thanks to the Friends of the Trustees.

Projects completed and worked on with the oversight of the Trustees.

Manse

- The sewage clean outs for the manse were cleaned out several times.

Sanctuary

- The sanctuary boiler condensation pumps were kept in working order.
- Provisions were made to allow the public to access the Sanctuary during the day.

Campus and landscaping

- The replacement of the retaining wall off Canyon Road was substantially completed. Completion is anticipated in Spring of 2024 as soon as re-permitted and weather permits concrete work.
- Unwanted trees, especially in the northeast corner of the property were continued to be removed. An elm tree that was impacting Manse structure was removed.
- Large trees in danger of falling over were removed.
- Weed and pine needle removal was a perpetual and substantial task throughout the year.
- The many flower beds were tended to by friends of the Trustees. Thanks to Georgia Strickfaden, Mary Venable, Nancy Nunnelley, Carole Watanabe, Ann Cooke, and Alison Greigs. A special thanks to Ann Cooke for adding new plants to the shaded area by the old entrance to Fellowship Hall.

Other

- Work parties held each month included such activities as pruning, weeding, sweeping snow removal, replacing outdoor lights and other activities. Many thanks to the friends of the trustees for helping with all these projects. Their help is greatly appreciated.

- Emergency Lights testing program was instituted. A special thanks to David Powell who championed the program and John Charles who performs replacements.
- AED and fire extinguishers are inspected monthly, and GFCIs were tested.
- Through interactions with the County, the fire hydrant on Canyon Rd. was put back into service by the LAFD.
- Several catalytic converter thefts were addressed through insurance and fabrication of deterrent barriers. Special thanks to Randy Erickson, Keith Lewis, and Anne Cooke for their time and effort in repairing vehicles.
- The Dodge van was loaned to Sonlight Christian Camp to use over the summer and was ultimately sold to SCC.

Eric Schmierer for the Trustees

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

ENDOWMENT FUND and MEMORIALS

Endowment and Memorial contributions to the church are generally bequeaths or gifts in memory of someone but can also be just a gift to either fund. However, the two funds are treated differently. Endowment gifts become part of a corpus from which only the earnings can be spent. Memorial gifts can be spent in total.

The Endowment Fund:

All endowment funds are invested in the New Covenant Balanced Growth Fund

Corpus Value on January 1, 2023	\$545,680.00
Additions: Warren & Bernice Quinn Memorial	\$1,000.00
Corpus Value on December 31, 2023	\$546,680.00

Market Value on January 1, 2023 (Invested with New Covenant)	\$971,406.35
Disbursements during 2023	
No disbursements were made in 2023	\$0.00
Total Disbursements from Endowment Fund	\$0.00

Market Value on December 31, 2023	\$1,094,428.57
This is ~12.7% gain for the year. (Invested with New Covenant)	

The Church Policy on the use of Endowment Funds specifies that the maximum amount that can be spent in any given year is 5% the average of the market value at the close of the four quarters of the previous year. However, we can never spend below the corpus value. Based on the average market value of the Endowment Fund for the four quarters of 2023 and the 5% rule, we have the option to use about \$51,300 in 2024.

The Memorials Fund

Memorial gifts are often designated, e.g., missions, capital improvements or music; however, with no designation, the funds remain in the Memorials General Fund.

Within the memorials there are two identified “pots” of money.

The General Memorial Fund, which is kept as cash in the church’s bank accounts.

The Pritchard Memorial Fund is invested with New Covenant Balanced Growth Fund.

While it is called a memorial fund, it is treated like an endowment per the Pritchard family and the primary focus is on nursery, children and youth activities. When we want to use some of the Pritchard funds, we redeem the amount needed and transfer those funds to the General Memorial. No money from the Pritchard Fund were used in 2023. On December 31, 2023, the Pritchard Memorial Fund in New Covenant has a market value of \$40,880.85.

The Memorial Committee received donations in 2023 in memory of the following individuals:

Ron Christman	Jack Gehre	Marge McInroy
Richard Swenson	Don Upham	Murlin Nutter

Gifts received in honor of these individuals:

Myrna Strong

The Financial Report for all Memorial activities is as follows:

	Balance January 1, 2023	\$	15,679.39
Income:			
	General Memorial & honor donations received in 2023	\$	2,363.95
Disbursements:			
	Sanctuary Camera	\$	2,701.67
	Transfer to Thrift Shop	\$	1,480.00
	Transfer to Columbarium	\$	20.00
	Storage Bins for Thrift Shop	\$	610.62
	Denominational Medallions	\$	1,120.00
	Support to Dignity Mission	\$	2,200.00
	Chimayo Weavings (2) for Sanctuary	\$	900.00
Total Transfers and Expenses		\$	9,032.29
	Balance December 31, 2023	\$	9,011.05

Respectfully Submitted:

John Puckett, Terry FitzPatrick, Jerry Grindstaff, and Nancy Lemons

FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

The Fellowship Committee is available to support your fellowship activities. We make sure we have adequate supplies for coffee fellowship and other food-related activities. We try to keep the Prep Room (in the Sanctuary) and the Graves Hall kitchen in good shape. Please feel free to contact us if there are any problems or shortages.

Thanks again to all those who step up to support the many activities sponsored by the Membership & Evangelism Board, the Christian Education Board, Monday Night at the Pit, the Board of Elders, LIFT (memorial services), and any others we have missed!

Here's to more fun and fellowship in 2024!

Laura Erickson
Pam Meyer

HISTORICAL COMMITTEE

The United Church in the Year 2023

It Was A Rather Quiet Year

The year 2023 was quiet by previous standards. Covid 19 seemed to be a disease of the past, and there were no giant fires or other major catastrophes to trouble the congregation.

Many members of the church staff were out of town as Christmas approached, and a sudden, heavy snowfall kept others at home.

Therefore, In preparation for this history, we asked just two questions: What was the 2023 event or activity most likely to affect the church in the future? And what was the most joyous experience in this church year?

In assessing the church year, ***Pastor David Elton*** said, “It was important that we continued to provide meaningful worship services, excellent music, informative classes on Sunday mornings, fun programs and events, and plenty of opportunities to serve and support our missions.”

He added, “I think that ... it is the weekly opportunities for worshipping, learning, serving, and connecting with others that are the building blocks for a healthy and vibrant congregation.”

He acknowledged, “We still have to be flexible. We need to adapt because of people’s travel schedules— weather, illnesses, and events around town—but it has been very important for us to offer more in-person events, classes, and programs for members and friends We hope to build on that in 2024.”

He mentioned the commitment of the Executive Council and the boards to “implementing the church’s growth plan (approved by them in 2022).” And he said this plan “has had a good start!”

“The church is very dedicated to providing opportunities for growth,” he said, and he added, “A perfect example is the new website (unitedchurchla.org) We plan to continue this in the new year,” he said.

He commented, “I think you can see new vitality in the ‘Children, Youth and Families’ this past year. Busy school and sport schedules have required creative scheduling for some of our programs, but it seems to be working.”

Turning to the second question, he said, “The arrival and dedication of our (new) children’s ministry director, ***Laura Loving***, is a joy.”

He added, “***(Associate Pastor) Keith Lewis’s work*** with the youth group and in the collaboration with Laura for family ministries has been excellent.”

He said, “Special thanks to our Sunday School teachers and the Christian Education Board for their important and sometimes thankless work.”

And, turning back to “Joy,” he said, “Choir participation, dedication, and talent was a weekly joy throughout this program year ... (And) we get to enjoy musicians and soloists during the summer months as well.”

He added, “I do think there is purpose and joy, (even when the work is hard), whenever our people get together to take care of the campus, help in the Thrift Shop, pack kids for Dignity Mission, help out in worship as a greeter, usher, or coffee maker ... provide meals for people in transition, and much more. Thank you to one and all! (This work) gives vitality to people’s lives!”

Ann Cooke, the church treasurer, said, “In a lot of ways, the job of treasurer is to keep things continuing.” She noted, “Our budget is over half a million (dollars) each year ... That isn’t all donations, but four fifths of it is...”

She pointed out that donations are usually “promises.” At the beginning of the year, she said, you don’t know how much will come in. “For me personally,” she said, “it’s been a good exercise in practicing faith.”

She noted that, “I’m not the only one doing this. It’s also the Finance Board—doing the hard work of trying to plan....”

“This year,” she commented, “the membership has been very generous. They’ve given the church a \$25,000 increase in pledging this year This is ***very*** positive. Thank you!”

She added, “What I hope is that the membership likes the plans that are being proposed for the coming year and (that they) are willing to support them....”

Suzanne Johnson, the church choir director, responded strongly to the question about “joy.” She said, “This is the best choir, I think, that I’ve had since I’ve been here”.... “Everybody pitches in.”

And she recalled that *Associate Pastor Keith Lewis* came to visit the choir once during a rehearsal, and said that the singers, “Knocked it out of the park every week.”

“It was so nice,” *Johnson* said.

Submitted by Charmian O. Schaller

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

2024 Nominating Committee Report

December 17, 2023

President

2024 John Bliss

President-Elect

2024 Jennifer Olsen

Past President

2024 Laura Erickson

Secretary

2024 *Vacant*

Treasurer

2024 Ann Cooke

Member-at-Large

2023-24 Chuck Tallman

2024-25 Alison Watkins

Christian Education

2023-24 Anthony Puckett

2023-24 Quinn McCulloch

2024-25 Diana Little

2024-25 Sheriden Smith

2024-25 *Vacant*

Elders

2023-24 Pamela Massey

2023-24 Randy Erickson

2024-25 Tricia McCulloch

2024-25 Brad Cooke

2024-25 *Vacant*

Finance

2023-24 Matt Michnovicz

2023-24 Steve Stringer

2023-24 Jeff Whicker

2024-25 Adda Moldt

2024-25 Bob Weeks

Membership and Evangelism

2023-24 Nancy Bliss

2023-24 Marie Michnovicz

2023-24 Ginny White

2024-25 Carol Brown

2024-25 Jim Cobble

Missions and Service

2023-24 Larry Luck

2023-24 John Puckett

2023-24 Oscar Sander

2023-24 Nina Thayer (also WCSS rep.)

2024-25 Ashley Reader

2024-25 Kim Taylor

Personnel

2023-24 Vicki Cobble

2023-24 Jerry Grindstaff

2023-24 Cookie Halsted

2023-24 Heath Watkins

2024-25 Milan Gadd

Trustees

2023-24 Norma Puckett

2023-24 Eric Schmierer

2024-25 Clark DeNevers

2024-25 Brad Meyer

2024-25 Jim Goforth

2024-25 Mark Crawford

Endow & Mem. John Puckett

Fellowship Laura Erickson, Pam Meyer

Historical Charmian Schaller

Public Rel. Georgia Strickfaden

Audio/Video Milan Gadd

Ushering Eric Schmierer

Nominating

2023-24 Pamela Massey

2023-24 Georgia Strickfaden

2024-25 John Charles

2024-25 Randy Erickson

2024 Laura Erickson

Names in bold are being elected
or re-elected for 2024.

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMITTEES

BUILDING COMMITTEE

There is no Building Committee report for 2023, due to lack of activity.

MEXICO MISSION

After missing three Spring Break Mexico Mission trips due to Covid 19, MEXICO MISSION 2023 was a go!

Seventeen adults and nine youth traveled to Puerto Peñasco, Mexico over spring break to build houses. (Los Alamos High School also sponsored two major trips that spring – the Band marched at Disneyland, and the Choir sang at Carnegie Hall. Also, all of our High School campers were rookies – after missing three trips, there were no veteran youth.)

The week went very smoothly. Because Easter was the last day of Spring Break, we decided to build for four days, and return to Los Alamos by Saturday evening. Amor Ministries offered the option of having local workers pour the concrete floor before we arrived. That made it possible to frame the walls and roof and apply stucco in four working days.

The families were very friendly and jumped in to help build. Everyone stayed healthy. We were able to take a break to visit the beach (windy and cold) and add to the local economy at the market street.

As always, the final gathering in the new houses, and handing off the keys, was very moving. Two families in Puerto Peñasco now have snug new homes! Thank you to everyone who has supported the trip over the years!

P.S. We did have some vehicle difficulties – Driving through Arizona on the way back to Los Alamos, the axle on the cook trailer broke. The trailer was towed to Holbrook, AZ and it took several months to get the parts and repair it. It is back on the road and ready for the next adventure!

Submitted by Laura Erickson

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

In line with the Church Growth Plan's call for a new website, the Public Relations Committee was involved with the Website Team convened by Rev. Laura Loving in order to better promote Childrens' Ministries at The United Church. More details about the website refurbishment can be found in the Membership and Evangelism report.

The Church Growth Plan recommends that the church become more visible and findable. As a member of the Chamber of Commerce, the church is participating in Chamber and County sponsored events, giving us a higher profile as a member of the community of Los Alamos. Also, the Los Alamos Community Foundation instituted a web-based volunteer recruitment site for local non-profits: volunteerlosalamos.org. The Thrift Shop is using the site for additional volunteer recruitment. This also gives The United Church exposure to the community of Los Alamos, especially volunteers looking for opportunities to be of service to humanity and the environment.

We collaborated with M&E board, and church member graphic artist Eric Schmierer, specifically targeting the visitor traffic to historic Los Alamos, with a rack card about our historic WW2 Chapel and the locally crafted stained glass windows. These cards are placed at visitor centers, the Bradbury and History Museums, and are among the other church brochures that we drop off for the Newcomers' packets sponsored by the Los Alamos Economic Development Corporation.

The budget, guidance, and help for Public Relations has come from the M&E Board, along with articles by former PR chair, Bernadette Lauritzen, and assistance from church members in reaching out via social media and print journalism on behalf of the church.

Thanks to cooperation by the local online and print news media, losalamosreporter.com and LADailyPost.com, many news releases about church services and activities received broad coverage.

We continue to have an ad in the *Names & Numbers* phone book, which is now allied with Google. Closer analysis of the benefit to cost have not been done, but my feeling is that we should have an ad in the old fashioned phone book, and if a large platform like Google will bring the church up first, that is value-added. Since the ad is expensive, I would welcome discussion about using the phonebook advertising, but for now our nice ad is in the yellow pages and we're listed in the white pages for another year.

Georgia Strickfaden, Public Relations Committee chair

WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN SERVICE SOCIETY (WCSS)

WCSS is open to any woman affiliated in any way with the United Church and we encourage participation and involvement by anyone interested in our missions and activities.

The Thrift Shop, LIFT, and Lunch Bunch all are included in WCSS. The Thrift Shop has been extraordinarily successful this year, distributing over \$50,000 to various charities benefiting women and children in Northern New Mexico. Thanks to the heroic efforts of the Thrift Shop leadership and all the many workers every week, over \$70,000 was earned in 2023 and will be distributed in 2024.

The Church and all those who have lost loved ones during the year are grateful to LIFT and all the efforts by Adda Moldt and her team to provide and serve refreshments for memorial services.

Lunch Bunch, our purely social, for fun activity will continue next year under the leadership of Vicki Cobble, with help from Cheryl Warren. If you have wish to be a part of Lunch Bunch in 2024, or just want more information, and have not signed up, contact Cheryl or Vicki.

As an organization WCSS has not been very "organized" during recent years, thanks largely to COVID. Toward the end of 2023 we began making an effort to become more active. In response to emails sent out, more than 60 women replied that they still wished to be a part of WCSS and in December we had an organizational meeting attended by nearly 30. Officers were elected for next year and there were volunteers to revise the WCSS Constitution, which has not been done since 1991. We are still looking for ideas for other WCSS activities and are always happy to have more women joining us!

Respectfully submitted,

Christina Sierk
WCSS Chair

WCSS FINANCIAL REPORT - December 31, 2023

GENERAL BUDGET RECEIPTS AND EXPENSES

	Curr. Mon. Receipts	Receipts Y-T-D	Curr. Mon. Expenses	Expenses Y-T-D	Balance
Balance 1/1/2023					168.19
Fellowship	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Misc.	0.00	0.00	0.00	61.96	
Totals	0.00	0.00	0.00	61.96	
Balance in Non-Missions Acct.					106.23

LIFT COMMITTEE

	Curr. Mon. Receipts	Receipts Y-T-D	Curr. Mon. Expenses	Expenses Y-T-D	
Balance 1/1/2023					8,265.79
Receipts and Expenses	150.00	500.00	158.90	782.26	
Totals	150.00	500.00	158.90	782.26	
Balance in LIFT Committee Fund					7,983.53

MISSIONS BUDGET IN 2023

	Curr. Mon. Receipts	Receipts Y-T-D	Curr. Mon. Expenses	Expenses Y-T-D	
Balance 1/1/2023					60,643.46
Budgeted Missions paid in 2023			0.00	57,350.00	
Contingency Fund paid in 2023			2,500.00	2,500.00	
Balance transfer to Miss. 2024			793.46	793.46	
Totals	0.00	0.00	3,293.46	60,643.46	
Balance in Missions 2023 budget					0.00

MISSIONS BUDGET FOR 2024

	Curr. Mon. Receipts	Receipts Y-T-D	Curr. Mon. Expenses	Expenses Y-T-D	
Balance 1/1/2023					0.00
Thrift Shop	4,636.38	71,790.71	0.00	404.68	
Christmas Sale	3,886.00	3,886.00	0.00	670.00	
Missions Donation	0.00	2,530.00			
EBT - Savings Account Interest	4.28	30.94			
EBT - Checking Account Interest	1.89	15.99			
Balance transfer from Miss. 2023	793.46	793.46			
Totals	9,322.01	79,047.10	0.00	1,074.68	
Net Income for Missions 2024					77,972.42
BALANCE IN ALL ACCOUNTS 12/31/2023:					86,062.18

2023 WCSS MISSIONS BUDGET

	2023 Budget
Missions	
Adelante (Homeless Children)	1,800.00
CASA	1,900.00
Casa Esperanza	2,100.00
Champions of Youth (B. Lauritzen)	500.00
Crisis Center of No. New Mexico	2,000.00
Cuidando Los Ninos	2,100.00
Dignity Missions	1,000.00
Esperanza Shelter	2,600.00
Family Strengths Network	4,250.00
First Born Program of Los Alamos	1,000.00
Four Corners Home for Children (fka. Navajo Mis	1,600.00
LA Cares	4,000.00
Life Link - La Luz	1,900.00
Los Alamos County Chaplain Corps	500.00
Los Alamos Family Council	1,800.00
Los Alamos Group Homes	4,000.00
Los Alamos Visiting Nurses	3,200.00
Many Mothers	1,500.00
Mesa to Mesa (fka. Somos Amigos of No. NM)	1,500.00
St. Elizabeth Emergency Shelter	2,000.00
St. John the Baptist Soup Kitchen	2,000.00
San Martin de Porres Soup Kitchen	2,000.00
Self Help, Inc.	2,500.00
Solace Crisis Treatment Center	2,600.00
The Ranches	4,000.00
Transgender Resource Center of NM	1,000.00
Truchas Pre-School	2,000.00
Total Budgeted Missions	57,350.00
Contingency Fund	3,293.46
TOTAL 2023 MISSIONS BUDGET	60,643.46

THRIFT SHOP

We had a wonderful year at the Thrift Shop and only had one unscheduled closure due to snow. We were able to lift all Covid-related restrictions, and we allowed an unlimited number of customers in the store during sale days.

We have approximately 50 regular volunteers who are involved with various aspects of the thrift shop, from sorting and pricing, advertising, working the sales on Wednesdays, and more. We have volunteers dedicated to working with books, jewelry, electronics, shoes, and an assortment of items in the men's corner. We really appreciate Cesar and Ana Maria Ojeda for all the work they do for the Thrift Shop. They are responsible for distributing the items that we do not put out on the racks and shelves to those in need in Northern New Mexico. We really appreciate the dedication and efforts of all these volunteers, several of whom are not church members. We have several new volunteers who have used the new community website for county-wide volunteer to connect with us. We thank Georgia Strickfaden for participating in the program and putting our information on the website.

We have really appreciated the wonderful new bins built by Frank Larocque and financed by the Memorials Committee. We moved the old bins next to the shed in the parking lot, and we use them to store the pass-on items until Cesar can take them.

When items have not sold in a few months, we cull them from the racks and shelves, and these items are sent to these special places. This year our "in kind" donations totaled \$2,478.50. Some of the recipients were the Dignity Mission, St. Elizabeth Shelters in Santa Fe, the Africa Book Project, the Christian Book Store in Albuquerque, a nursing home in Las Vegas, NM, the Colores United Mission in Hatch, NM, Hoodies for the hurricane victims in Texas, St. Francis Indian School, SD, and some individuals who received vouchers from various organizations in town where we have placed Thrift Shop vouchers.

The Thrift shop was deep cleaned during the Christmas break. Several volunteers came in to clean all the shelves, cull and organize areas, and move items off the floors. Cesar and Ana Maria moved furniture and swept and mopped the entire floor. We are all set for the new year, but it is quite noticeable that the cement floor needs a new coat of paint.

The thrift shop was open for a total of 49 Wednesdays this year, and two Saturdays one for our Halloween sale, and one for our annual All Things Christmas sale. The net income for this year was \$74,608.00 including the Halloween and Christmas sales. This reflects a 25% increase over last year.

The WCSS will be making decisions about the recipients of the missions budget in the next few weeks.

Respectfully submitted,

The Thrift Shop Leadership Team

Carol Brown, Vicki Buley, Linda Hardie, Nancy Nunnelley, Norma Puckett, Nina Thayer, and Cheryl Warren

LIFT COMMITTEE

The LIFT Committee is part of the Women's Christian Service Society. LIFT provides refreshments after memorial services and funerals with the help of many members who bake cookies, make sandwiches and assist with food preparation at the service.

In 2023 the LIFT Committee served refreshments for 6 funeral/memorial services for the families and friends of Marge McInroy, Richard Swenson, Murlin Nutter, Jack Gehre, Marie Andrew, and Ron Christman. About 415 people were served refreshments in 2023 following the services held from February to December.

The Committee would like to thank all those who made food and monetary contributions, especially all the wonderful cookies and other baked goods made by 12 different people several times. Also, we thank the 12 people who assisted with food preparation and serving several times. Special thanks to Carol Watanabe who provided flower bouquets for the serving tables when needed.

The LIFT Committee does not charge for providing refreshments after memorial services, but some families do make donations to offset the cost of the food. The financial report for the year is part of the WCSS Finance Report found elsewhere in this annual report.

Respectfully submitted,

The LIFT Committee
Adda Moldt
Norma Puckett
Cookie Halsted

DIGNITY MISSION

This is United Church's third full year of involvement with the Dignity Mission, a border mission, supplying hygiene products and other necessities to immigrants in El Paso, TX and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. This year we assembled 1200 dignity kits, each containing a dozen hygiene products and also 106 backpacks with school supplies. Volunteer seamstresses sewed 223 colorful holiday-themed fabric bags, which we filled with small stuffed animals and other toys, many collected throughout the year from our own Thrift Shop.

In addition, we packed more than two dozen large garbage bags with clothes and sandals culled from our Thrift Shop racks and more than 100 bath sized towels. All of these were transported to the collection point in Placitas, NM by Pastor Keith. There Jack and Cheryl Ferrell, volunteers from First Presbyterian of Placitas, rent a large truck and transport all the collected donations to Dr. Eva Moya in El Paso. Dr. Moya is a sociology professor at UTEP, who along with family, friends and students coordinates the distribution of all the donations at facilities in both El Paso and Juarez housing immigrants awaiting asylum.

This year the mission was supported by \$7,200 jointly from the M&S Board (\$4K), WCSS (\$1K) and Memorials Committee (\$2.2K) of United Church and donations from our volunteers.

From my perspective, the best aspects of this ministry are that everyone involved is a volunteer, donations are delivered directly to those most in need, and there is no overhead except transportation. This year we had about 25 volunteers who helped with the assembly of the kits, backpacks and Christmas bags. In addition, it provided a wonderful opportunity for our Bible School class to have a hands-on mission project under Pastor Laura's direction.

If you would like to be involved in the coming year, please contact Nina Thayer, Chris Sierk, or call the church office.

Nina Thayer, Dignity Mission Coordinator

USHERS

This last year we returned to passing the offering plates instead of just having one collection plate at the sanctuary entrance. This, of course, requires 4 ushers, 2 for each side, but we rarely had that many scheduled ushers for any given week. Fortunately, we were able recruit present but non-scheduled ushers from the pews to help with the collection. However, it would be nice to have 5 more ushers for each week. We currently have openings for 2 more ushers for second Sundays, 1 more usher for third Sundays, 1 more usher for fourth Sundays, and 1 more usher when there is a fifth Sunday.

This last year was also my last year as head usher. The next head usher will also be Eric, but Eric Schmierer instead of Eric Bjorklund. Eric Bjorklund will now be devoting his talents to the church choir.

Ushering is an important, but not very difficult task. It's a good way to meet people from the congregation, and an important function for the church. So please consider becoming an usher, and then give a call at to Eric Schmierer at 505-660-9936 or send an e-mail to eschmierer@msn.com

If you don't want to commit to any specific Sunday, you can also sign up to be a "Substitute Usher" on an as needed basis.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eric Bjorklund, Head Usher Emeritus