



2023 Year in Review



Native American Indigenous Ministries

Jicarilla Apache Reformed Church

Because of your generosity, Pastor Brad was able to conduct 27 funerals for people in the tribe. Only a few were for people actually involved with our weekly church services, so that's a lot of gospel-preaching to non-believers! Praise God for those opportunities!

The Jicarilla Apache Reformed Church has also seen a significant increase in the number of people attending Sunday services. The sanctuary has been fuller than it was even before COVID! We've even seen some of the indigent population that we feed (and give coats to) at our back door attending church services. God is so good!

Our mission challenges this year have been few and relatively minor. Meeting our church budget with our weekly offering has been a challenge, although we ended the year without a deficit, thanks to cost-saving measures. Please pray for the church members to be moved to increase their giving to keep up with increasing costs.

Personally, our family has faced some real challenges this year. Brad's 91-year-old father moved in with us in July and one of our children has experienced significant mental health challenges. Our family is coping, but these issues are not simple or easy. Please pray for us to have wisdom, patience, balance, and stamina in these areas. Pray for the protection and healing of our children. Pray for Brad's father to grow closer to Jesus during his life here.

Winnebago Reformed Church

Due to the generosity of congregations with a history of connection with Winnebago Reformed, we were able to make some much needed repairs to our 100+ year old property. New gutters on the church and parsonage, furnace repairs, new water softeners for the church and parsonage, repairs to a cracking foundation edge, and new church kitchen countertop. We were able to hold vacation Bible school this summer for the first time since 2020 COVID restrictions. We have found a pastor after three years of using pulpit supply only, and were able to repaint and repair the parsonage before they moved in.

While we have seen attendance pick up now that we have consistency with a new pastor, the church van is falling apart, making it difficult to pick up children and adults who do not have reliable transportation themselves to get to church and other programs. One of our members recently re-vamped our website and Facebook page to include a PayPal QR code for those who may want to support us in some specific way—youth work, the van, repairs, or outreach programs.

- Pray for our new leadership, Rev. Justin Longcoy and his wife Amy, as they face the challenges of working in our community.
- Pray for the Atlas of Winnebago community resources clearing house and food pantry for which we provide the space and utilities as a mission outreach.

- Pray for the high level of addiction in the community and the programs, both run by the Winnebago Tribe and the churches in town, to address the issues surrounding such addictions.

Mescalero Reformed Church

Greetings from Mescalero, New Mexico and the people of Mescalero Reformed Church!

It has been a wonderfully busy and productive year for the church with regular weekly ministry opportunities. This includes our youth group for grades 6-12, an after-school program (Kids' Club) for children in grades 1-5, as well as regular weekly Bible studies for women and men. Noticeable in these opportunities are the local people stepping up as leaders. The youth group is led by Vincea Nez, a young lady who grew up in the church and youth group herself. Jeff Botella has also been involved in the youth group leadership while also helping with our after-school program as our lesson teacher as well as one of our van drivers. And the women's Bible study has been led by two wonderful women of the church, June Denny and Marge Salcido.

We've also had a group of Northwestern College (Iowa) students visit us for a week in March. They helped with some work around the church as well as share in some ministry opportunities with our youth group. Northwestern has been sending groups of students to Mescalero during their Spring Break for five years.

We ran a Vacation Bible School once again in June. This was a week that saw children from grades K-5 sing songs, receive a Bible lesson, work on a craft, play some games, and also have a snack to eat. We met each morning from 9:00-noon and averaged 80 children each day. It was a wonderful week! A group of local leaders were very helpful in leading the various parts of the week along with five young adults from Michigan. These young adults from Michigan have been helping with our VBS for around 10 years. Also helping were two wonderful women (mother and daughter) from New York who were in Mescalero for the first time.

In July, we were blessed with Huron Claus from the CHIEF organization for our annual Faith Walk and three-day Camp Meeting. We walked and prayed around our community and then followed that with hearing the good and challenging words from Huron to continue spread God's Word and furthering his kingdom in this place.

In large part due to your prayer and financial support, the Mescalero community was truly blessed by these programs. We are grateful. Also, I am grateful for the people from Mescalero who are taking on leadership roles within the church and I ask that you join me in continuing to pray for us and also in giving God thanks for His many provisions.



Above, left to right: youth pumpkin pie sales fundraiser and faith walk.



Above left to right: Thanksgiving potluck dinner and youth group and NWC students.

We continue to battle a number of issues on the reservation. Included are dysfunction within the family, alcoholism, and drug addiction, as well as financial distress within the community. The presence of these significant obstacles in the lives of so many people in our community means our ministry has a lot of ups and downs. So we ask for your continued prayers and financial support in this battle for spreading God's kingdom in this place.



Vacation Bible School 2023

One significant personal prayer request is that you help spread the word of all the wonderful things that God is doing through Mescalero Reformed Church. Mescalero is such a wonderful place and it is my hope and prayer that more people will come and visit to learn more of the culture as well as to hear from the beautiful people on the reservation and to enjoy the wonderful landscape.

We also ask for prayer that people who have left the church for some reason will return. We are also in need of more people to help teach in our Sunday school classes. In a more general way, we ask that you pray for healing within troubled families and people battling addictions.

Pastor Mark Vellinga