



## **Native American Indigenous Ministries Update November 2024**

*You are receiving this update because you have expressed an interest in or support one or more of the Native American Indigenous Ministries (NAIM) congregations within the Reformed Church in America. This combined update will share with you the work God is doing through your support of NAIM congregations. Know that each letter may not include updates from every church. Thank you for your partnership in mission!*

### **Jicarilla Apache Reformed Church**

The last part of 2024 has been full of the things that we have long done here, including feeding 5-10 people/week who are in need of a meal and providing people with winter coats, hats, and gloves. These activities have been made possible by churches and people who financially gave to these ministries. There have been a number of deaths in the community and, in a ten-week span, Pastor Brad did nine funerals, all for people not connected to our church, and all being opportunities to point grieving people to the hope of the Lord Jesus. We are working with another local church to begin a joint ministry group for high school youth. This is very exciting and we would appreciate your prayers over the leadership and the youth as the program gets going.

*Brad and Robin Kautz*

### **Mescalero Reformed Church**

Greetings from Mescalero, New Mexico, and the people of Mescalero Reformed Church! We are excited to share with you what has been happening in the church as well as our plans for a busy holiday and winter season after a wonderful summer season of ministry.

As I have written before, we continue to offer a wide variety of regular weekly ministry opportunities. This includes our high school and "young at heart" youth group for grades 9-12 (and beyond), an after-school program for children in grades 1-5, as well as regular weekly Bible studies for women and men. In addition, there is a Women's Gathering that meets every Wednesday morning for fellowship, study, and working on various projects. We have also launched a middle school youth group for people in grades 6-8.

And, worth repeating, noticeable in these opportunities are the local people who are 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 is our coordinator for the after-school program. The middle school group is led by Clara Rice and Miranda Bell, and the Women's Gathering and Women's Bible Study has been led by June Denny.

*Would you like to receive these updates digitally? Please email Kelli at [kgilmore@rca.org](mailto:kgilmore@rca.org) to be added to the email list. You will receive more timely updates from the missionary you support and help us be good stewards of our resources.*



*Women's Gathering pictures with their craft (I asked them to give me a silly-looking picture for the second one 😊)*

In September, we hosted the Southwest Classis meeting and a "She is Called Women's Gathering". It was so much fun to have guests from Arizona, Washington, New York, and Minnesota with us for a long weekend. We are so thankful for the visit and leadership of Rev. Liz Testa and Rev. Phil Assink, and we look forward to more involvement between our Mescalero Native American people and the Reformed Church in America (RCA). Along a similar line is the involvement of Vincea and Jeff in the RCA's Native American Indigenous Ministries Council (NAIMC).

Looking ahead, a small group of us from Mescalero Reformed are making plans to attend Mission 2025 in January, 2025. Added to that will be another group attending the Association of Partners in Christian Education (APCE) Conference in early February. We have attended these conferences before with the hope and expectation that it will help train our own leaders and teachers here at Mescalero Reformed Church, as well as provide needed networking with other church leaders.



*Southwest Classis members enjoying their Apache tacos*

We're also anticipating a work group of Northwestern College (Iowa) students to visit us for a week in March. Northwestern has been sending groups of students to Mescalero during their Spring Break for at least seven years. They will be helping with some work around the church, as well as share in some ministry opportunities.

With the holidays, we are working on a number of ministry outreach opportunities that include a Thanksgiving dinner provided by our friends from Blended Nations Church in Chapparral, NM; a pumpkin pie fundraiser for our youth group (we hope to sell 300 pies this year!); Christmas tree decorating; pancake breakfast and craft sale; and our annual Christmas eve program.

In large part due to your prayer and financial support, the Mescalero community is 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. I ask that you join me in continuing to pray for us and also give God thanks for his many provisions.

*RCA Global Mission does not receive denominational assessments or covenant shares. We depend on the faithful generosity of churches and individuals.*

If you are taking a road trip to the Southwest this winter, please stop by and visit us in Mescalero, NM. We love to share the ministry!

*Pastor Mark Vellinga*



*Above left: Mescalero children singing an Apache hymn; above right: Mescalero church members attending the CBE Conference in Denver, CO*

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