

Impact Report Spring 2021

Thank you for your support of the Aspen Chapel. In trying times, your loyal support has carried us through so we may continue to do what matters most - serve the community. We hope this highlight of recent activities helps you understand just how much impact you have made on our community.

Impact Spotlight - Partnership with Aspen Family Connections

We were privileged to be able to offer our space to Aspen Family Connections through November, December, and January so that they could offer food to those who were in need.

About 200 people came through every week and it was amazing to see the volunteers (some from the Chapel) helping. Catherine Anne Provine was a volunteer and popped in to see us.

At right: community members picking up food last fall. At right below is a letter that Katherine Sand graciously wrote and appeared in both the Aspen Times and The Aspen Daily News.



A message from the Administrative Board

Like everyone else, the Chapel is struggling with the pandemic's persistent effects. The Admin Board has worked hard since last summer to reduce expenses and provide a new way forward for the Chapel. Our service to the community continues to be at the core of our work, which you – as a dear friend and generous donor – make possible.

With eyes toward financial stability and heavy hearts, we were compelled to reduce our – music, education, outreach, managing director – positions. These were held respectively by - Susan Nicholson, Michelle Skagan, Elaine Bonds, and Heather Macdonald – all talented, long-serving employees. And, we continue to work on improving our governance, operational focus, and virtual content opportunities.

Looking to the future, since November 1st: our new, operational model is within a conservatively forecasted budget. Our new community-service initiatives have been well received. We continue to engage hundreds of community members through our virtual, online programs. People like you have stepped up with increased support to fill gaps from lost program and event income.

And, core volunteers have also increased their – time, talent and treasure – to help our cause and to resume our path towards our noble, ambitious mission statement. Thanks to all for your support. Green shoots of hope abound!

Gratitude from Aspen Family Connections

Editor:

I would like to express heartfelt gratitude to Rev. Nicholas Vesey and the Board of Trustees of the Aspen Chapel for providing a home for The Aspen Family Connections/Food Bank weekly mobile food distribution between November and January. They are wonderful friends to our community.

We were in a bind, needing a new distribution site, and the chapel wholeheartedly welcomed us. It was a great pleasure to meet a number of the Aspen Chapel's congregation who came along as volunteers and brought food donations. The Aspen Jewish Congregation has provided funding, and we are also grateful to the Meadowood HOA, whose residents were very understanding. Our community continues to sustain and inspire our efforts to support locals experiencing hardship during the pandemic.

The Aspen weekly mobile food distribution is now on a larger site (easier for our truck!) at the Aspen

Golf Course, every Wednesday from noon to 2 p.m., and our new hosts are the city of Aspen and the Ute Mountaineer's Cross County Center, which have been extremely helpful.

Any member of the public is welcome to come along, and thanks to the Food Bank of the Rockies and other partners, we have plenty of food to distribute. Thank you friends!

Katherine Sand
Aspen Family Connections

Partnership is paramount to our service to the community. Aspen Family Connections is a family resource center, created to connect all Pitkin County children, youth and families with a wide range of community resources.

With gratitude,

Bruce Merrifield
Administrative Board Chair

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Christmas - A Time to Come Together (Virtually) Near and Far

Although it was very disappointing that we were not able to host either our Lessons and Carols or our Christmas Eve Services in person, we certainly got our message out with live streaming (we managed to attract 502 views on our website and Facebook page for Lessons and Carols, and 532 views for our Christmas Eve service.)

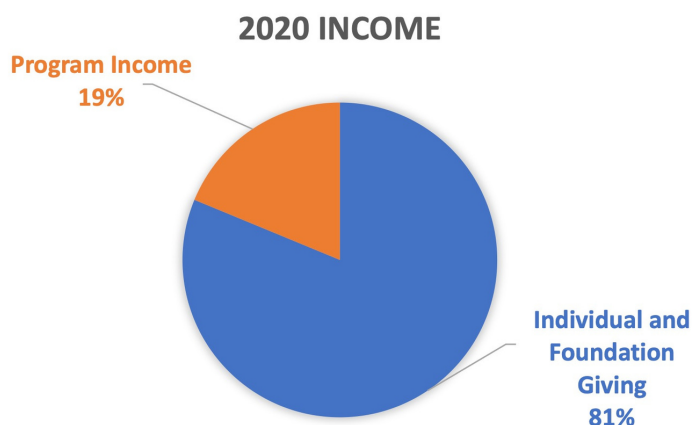
The Chapel's Christmas services were pre-recorded and featured carols and readings and were available online and through streaming services. With headlining the front page of the Aspen Times on Christmas Day, as well as receiving extensive coverage in both the Times and the Daily News inside pages, we were able to reach the broader community and welcomed visitors and locals to join for our online programs.



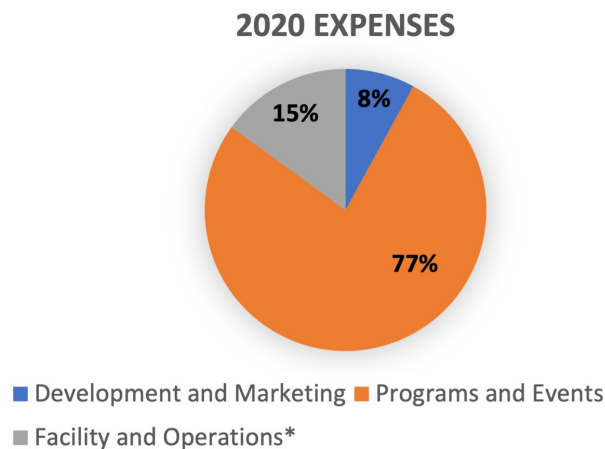
Heather, Jessica, Nicholas and Samuel Vesey on the set of their Christmas Eve celebration event.

Financial/Program Update

Thank you for your generous donations. We take financial responsibility very seriously while ensuring service to our community and honoring our donors. We hope the charts below provide you with a sense of the Chapel's income and the ways in which your donations are used.



An increase in general operations donations support in 2020 allowed the Chapel to continue amidst a decrease in events and programmatic income.



*This does not include a one time expense to repair the Aspen Chapel's roof.

Impact Spotlight - Cooking up a Storm



As we could not host our traditional meal in the Chapel for people without homes on Martin Luther King Day, we asked people to cook up a storm instead.

35 people offered to cook a meal for 8 which works out to 280 meals promised. The greater community supported our efforts and many people have offered to cook meals throughout the year.



File photo

Due to COVID-19, the Aspen Chapel will not host its usual MLK Day meal for the Aspen Homeless Shelter's clients this year. Instead, community members are invited to prepare a meal for eight, freeze it and bring it to the county's Health and Human Services Building to be served as part of the shelter's Hot Evening Meal program.

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"During this time of COVID, I think one of the things that all of us are looking for is, how can we serve?" Vesey said.

The Aspen Homeless Shelter will store the frozen meals and serve them as part of its Hot Evening Meal program, which provides food and nourishment to individuals in the community who may need a helping hand.

"I think, quite often, the people who are less fortunate than ourselves feel not seen in the community — almost invisible," Vesey said. "Martin Luther King Day is really all about inclusion, about service, about serving our communities."

According to Vesey, 20 community members had already committed to making 160 meals for the Chapel's "Cook up a Storm" event on Monday.

"Everytime they sit down over the next period of time, they will know that someone has made this meal with love," Vesey said.

Meals should be clearly labeled and can be meat based, vegetarian, or even a dessert, Vesey explained.

Anyone interested in preparing a meal can email Vesey at nicholas@aspenchapel.org for additional information.

Aspen Homeless Shelter Executive Dr. Vince Savage, who has devoted most of his life to social justice work, recalled jumping in his 1961 Volkswagen Beetle in Bloomington, Indiana, and driving south to participate in the Civil Rights Movement, where he learned from Martin Luther King Jr., himself, at Ebenezer Baptist Church.

"Our mission back then was either voter registration or organizing the Poor People's March on Washington," Savage said. "I wasn't part of the march at Edmund Pettus Bridge, but I had been part of plenty of other marches through small towns in Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia."

"It means a lot," Savage said of the home-cooked meals the Aspen Chapel's "Cook up a Storm" event would produce. "It's not just eating a sandwich on the street corner somewhere, it really is a link to people feeling like they have a home of sorts."

matthew@aspendailynews.com

Aspen Daily News

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Aspen Chapel invites community to 'Cook up a storm' on MLK Day

Aspen Homeless Shelter to utilize food at its Hot Evening Meal program

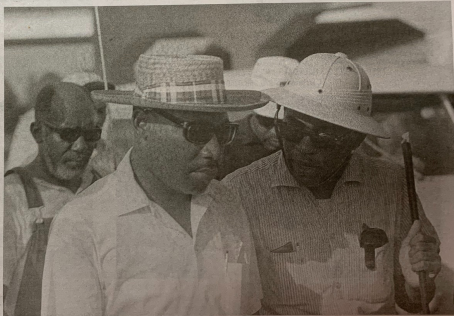
By Matthew Bennett
Aspen Daily News Staff Writer

Aspen Chapel's minister, Nicholas Vesey, will prepare one of his signature dishes this Martin Luther King Day for others to enjoy at a later date.

"I'm cooking spaghetti Bolognese," Vesey said. "It's a particular favorite of mine, spaghetti Bolognese. I'm English and I love the European taste."

Over the past few years, Vesey and other members of the Aspen Chapel have traditionally cooked a family-style meal on MLK Day and served it to the Aspen Homeless Shelter's clients. However, due to the pandemic, the special MLK Day meal, Jan. 18, will not occur at the chapel like usual, but will carry on nonetheless.

This year, Aspen Chapel has invited interested community members to prepare a meal for eight people on MLK Day, freeze it in a disposable container, and bring it to the day center at the Pitkin County Health and Human Services building (405 Castle Creek Road) anytime after Jan. 18.



AP Photo, File
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is pictured in this photo from June 25, 1966 speaking with James Meredith (right) after they met on U.S. 51 near Tougaloo, Miss. MLK's birthday, which is today, will be marked in a new way by the Aspen Chapel due to the pandemic.

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Cooking up a Storm was also covered by a series of interviews on NPR

Your gift to the Chapel reaches far beyond its physical walls.

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Gay Ski Week

For the first time ever we actively supported Gay Ski Week as a part of our inclusivity efforts. We placed a huge banner on the steeple which attracted the attention of the Aspen Times.



Jonathon Stalls, who identifies as LGBTQIA+, joined virtually as guest speaker for Gay Ski Week.

A COHESIVE CONGREGATION



RELLEY BRIDGEMAN/ASPEN TIMES
A large pride banner hangs on the front of Aspen Chapel for Aspen Gay Ski Week on Wednesday. On Sunday, Jonathon Stalls, a preacher who identifies as LGBTQIA+, will be giving the sermon at the chapel. Although Aspen Gay Ski Week is still happening, there will be no in-person events or parties. Instead, the event is focusing on virtually fundraising for the LGBTQIA+ community.

The Aspen Chapel Art Gallery

In spite of the virus, the Gallery managed to successfully hold its Small Wonders Show.

26 artists sold 221 pieces raising \$3,600 for Holiday Baskets. 250 - 300 people visited the gallery which was made Covid Safe with 'viewing Squares.' (see picture!)

The Small Wonders show was sponsored by Big Wrap, Hensley and James Peterson, Aspen Snowmass Sotheby's International Realty, and an Anonymous Donor.

The next show 'Happy Trails' in partnership with Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers is open as of February 17th.

We are grateful to Larry and Susan Marx as Season Sponsors.



"The Aspen Chapel Gallery is free to the public and gives our local artists a wonderful opportunity to show their works. This 'secret' has been active for more than 30 years in the lower level of the Aspen Chapel. It's a gem in Aspen's cultural crown. "
— Susan Marx, Art Patron

Community Update

We want to express our gratitude to those employees who were laid off during the reorganization. Susan Nicholson is a talented musician who served the Chapel for over 35 years and inspired a sumptuous music program that was renown throughout the Valley. We hope that Susan will continue to serve the Aspen community with her amazing talents. Elaine Bonds worked tirelessly for the families and children of the Roaring Fork Valley through her many outreach activities that included Tuesday Connect!, Holiday Baskets, meals supporting the Day Shelter population, and representing the Chapel on the Pitkin County's housing stability coalition. Michelle Skagan was our newest addition who inspired us with her uplifting youth program including a trip with high school students to the US/Mexican border. Heather Macdonald worked as our Managing Director and kept us on track and inspired many events.



The Iconic Aspen Chapel Building

The Aspen Chapel is a unique building that welcomes all into the town of Aspen. In the midst of all the difficulties of the pandemic, we had a wonderful opportunity (loan from SBA) to replace a much-needed roof and, in the process, fix serious structural issues that could have resulted in a catastrophe. We now can weather the storms and snows that Aspen has to offer and are safe from fire (and up to code!).

At right, Kevin and Beth Sandell selected the Aspen Chapel as the location of their intimate wedding last summer.



As we continue to weather the pandemic, we welcome you to visit the Chapel grounds to enjoy the architecture of the Chapel and the amazing views from the Chapel balconies.

A personal tour can be arranged by contacting Peggy Burke at peggy@aspenchapel.org.

"The most memorable day of 2020 was my nephew's wedding (above) in the Chapel garden in July. Despite the pandemic, we enjoyed a beautiful, very small family wedding in the most beautiful surroundings of the Aspen Chapel. I am enjoying zoom yoga and meditation and I can't wait until we can be together again inside the Chapel, in the garden and at the Art Gallery." - Linda Sandell

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For our community's safety, our programs will continue to be offered remotely. We look forward to welcoming you all back to the Chapel in person when it is healthy and safe to do so.

Further details may be found at www.AspenChapel.org.

We hope you join us for our regular weekly programs!



Sunday Morning Service
Nicholas and Heather Vesey
9:30am online



Heather Vesey's Morning
Meditation Monday -
Thursday 9:00am via Zoom



Buddhist (Vipassana) Meditation
with Lisa Goddard
Wednesday
8:00-9:30am via Zoom



INSIGHTS with
Barbara Bloemsma
Wednesday
6:00-7:00pm via Zoom



Yoga with Mimi Hauenstein
Tuesday
5:30-7:00pm via Zoom



Aspen Noise! with Barbara
Bloemsma Wednesday
5:30-6:30pm via Zoom

All times are listed in Mountain Standard Time.

All of this is possible due to your support. Thank you!
The Aspen Chapel is a spiritual home for everyone. We are not affiliated with any religious organization and are thus supported entirely by our community.