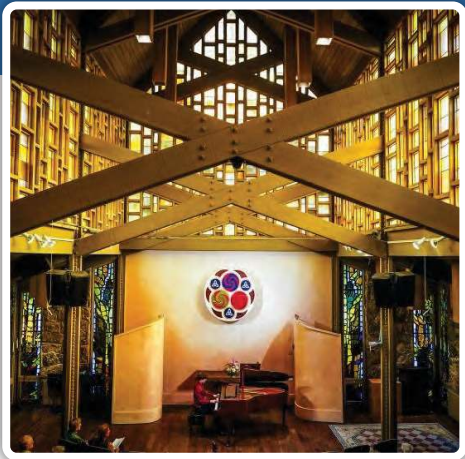


Upcoming events

June 22, Annual Meeting after Sunday Service
July – August, Aspen Music Festival FREE spotlight performances on Thursdays
June – August, Aspen Music Festival students featured at Sunday services
August 12, Annual Garden Party with wine tasting, string trio, English teas & treats and more!



Aspen Chapel Community
Financial Update

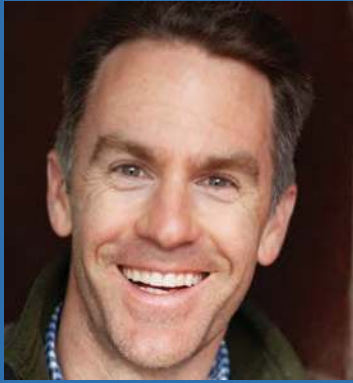
For 2024 our total expenses were \$608K up from \$595k in '23 (a 1% increase in spite of higher inflation). Our bottom line was essentially a breakeven. This result is in spite of our incurring higher building costs and some diverted donations due to the building Trustees' legal challenges. And, our having a successful, separate fundraiser to ensure Vesey-family, housing stability through June 30, 2028.

For the first few months of '25, we are off to an even better start than in '24 with both expenses down and incoming funds up. There is measurably big, new interest in all-things Chapel thanks to - the Marianne Williamson event in December and new video content and events via Aspenwisdom.org. Here's hoping that in spite of recent global financial turbulence, we will continue to improve the vitality and financial stability of the Aspen Chapel Community.

Bruce Merrifield



The Human Face of
the Aspen Chapel



Annual
Report
2024/5



Read these snapshots of what it is like to be a part of the life of the Aspen Chapel

In this annual report we wanted to give you an idea of what it is on the living experience. Hear it from the human faces of the chapel.



Nicholas’ Story
Spiritual Leader

I live my life with the Chapel as the backdrop. First and foremost I look to my family. Sam in college at Skidmore, Jessica at NYU Tisch, and Heather as my partner.

Then, everything else comes under that backdrop of the Chapel. How can I support the community I serve to be the best it can be in making this world a better place.

The engine room of this work is my meditation practice in the morning. I get to the Chapel between 6 and 6.30am, and then spend about an hour and a quarter in my practice.

This shapes my day, my week and the foreseeable future.

Out of my practice comes ideas for talks, for programs and for the general direction that I navigate for the future.

I spend a huge part of the day at my computer; writing, organizing the websites, doing marketing, posters, videos and press releases.

That is punctuated by people dropping in to chat, to give me ideas, or even feedback on what I am doing.

I see the context of my life as being global. I think globally and nationally, but act locally. I want us to be relevant and effective.

I pay attention to numbers – how many in the Chapel on a Sunday (about 55), how many on line (about 200) and posts and likes around what we do.

It is an all consuming occupation, and to relax I like to cook, swim, watch TV, read and spend time with the family.

I feel very lucky in what I do. I see my main task as being reaching for that special place within us all that feeds each of us and those all around us. If we can do that, then we will have made our contribution.

Thank you for being involved.



Andy’s Story
Loneliness Project

I grew up in Aspen, having moved here as a child in 1974 under unusual circumstances as many of you know, and regularly attended masses at St Mary’s.

I began having a shift in my spirituality around 2008 when I read a book by Wayne Dyer about Taoism, and have really never looked back towards western religions ever since. I find the community and connectedness aspects of eastern religions and philosophies so much more appealing, and I am so thankful that Nicholas incorporates these ideas into many of his homilies.

I have recently taken on the leadership role for the Chapel sponsored Loneliness Project, and am enjoying the support and encouragement our community has provided as we work towards making an impact in whatever way we can for this terrible condition which affects so many people.

Andy Godfrey



Last year we showed 4 films as a part of our ‘Sacred Cinema Series’. Between 40-50 people came to each showing and we had popcorn and refreshments to make the cinema experience complete.

The event was sponsored by the ‘Journal of Religion and Film’, and we will be repeating the series in the fall.

Justin Nyberg is chair of the series, so if you have any suggestions, please pass them on to him.





Shelly's Story Supper Club

My life faith experience has been Christian through being welcomed to many churches, Methodist, Presbyterian, Catholic, Episcopal, Congregational, Unitarian and Buddhist. After arriving in the Valley and visiting a dozen churches, I found my spiritual home with the Aspen Chapel community and Nicholas Vesey. We explore and learn in a welcoming, inclusive and engaged community, each growing in divine wisdom to become more purposeful in one's life.

Shelly Merriam



Liz's Story Reception Team

After each Sunday service, we welcome all attendees to join us for a coffee, tea and small bites reception in our downstairs gallery. This has been a tradition for many years at the Chapel. It is a time for people to converse with each other, whether folks are catching up on each other's week's activities or meeting a person for the first time.

Thanks also to Nicholas for setting up the coffee every week!

The reception is provided each week by volunteers. Please contact info@aspenchapel.org if you are interested in joining in.

Liz Bokram



Justin's Story Book Club

I was probably the least likely person to start a Chapel book club. But I found myself reading a lot of inspiring spiritual books on my own, and wishing I had a group of open-minded and curious friends to explore them with. So I suggested to Nicholas that someone should convene a group to discuss great spiritual books--and I guess I nominated myself. It's been a great way to meet like-minded seekers and hear diverse viewpoints. We're on to our 8th book and counting!

Justin Nyberg



Bruce's Story Board Chair

My wife, Tracy, and I moved to Snowmass Village 7 years ago. We were pleased to find the Aspen Chapel where every service we attend gives us an inspirational nudge whether it be from: the supportive community members, the building architecture, the music, and/or Vesey-crafted wisdom.

Before accepting the offer to be the Board Chair amidst Covid challenges, I re-read our mission statement and got energized to serve. Our founders' concerns and wishes (in the late '60's) are even more relevant today. Thanks to our in-house, audio-visual capabilities and covid's zoomification of the world, we can now: *"engage religious faith in conversation with the world...to seek relevant answers in a troubled world..(and) here create a national-global ecumenical center"*.

How so? Our virtual-reach trends are strong. Our on-line-service attendance is now four times our physical attendance and growing. The stats for our "Aspen Initiative" webinar via our AspenWisdom.org site have involved many spiritual leaders and reached tens of thousands of viewers around the world (and also growing). Nicholas' forthcoming, June 7th-8th, sequel to the initial webinar (still under development) has an even bigger potential reach. These outreach stats are in turn growing our core: physical-attendance community, fundraising and constellation of wisdom contributors.

"Wisdom" has been cherished and pursued by philosophers and spiritual traditions since recorded time. Today, it's in short supply. I believe that we, at the Aspen Chapel, can help more people around the world get a bit wiser a bit sooner to find both peace and the desire to serve the greater good. We will always have more work to do, but let's see if we can't continue to fulfill our founders' vision in an economically viable way.

Peace to all!

Bruce Merrifield



Barbara's Story Aspen Noise

I started Aspen Noise in 2016 with the idea of an all-inclusive singing group. I wanted to welcome all ages as well as all abilities. It has grown to be even better than I had imagined! I love to select the songs, and rewrite the lyrics so that we can reflect the specific message of each event- that's one of my very favorite things to do.

I aspire to cultivate feelings of inclusion and appreciation, and to shine a light on every person, just as they are. I hope my efforts touch people, and that those positive feelings develop and grow.

Barbara Bloemsma

The Aspen Chapel Gallery



Peggy's Story Operations Manager

A local since 1997, I joined the Chapel staff at an uncertain and challenging time during Covid in 2020. Since then I have seen a growing community which has been a comfort & beacon to so many. It astounds me that we can offer such a wide range of events: Labyrinth walks, Alzheimer's talk, Mayan calendar, Voice of the Feminine (2024), Speaker Series (2023), Singing Bowls, Sacred films, Supper Clubs, Book Club, emerging Social Club, Death Café, Sacred chanting, Ecstatic dance, music performances, Breathwork sessions and on.

The Chapel has also collaborated with community partners: Aspen Music Festival & School, Theatre Aspen, the Aspen Institute, Pathfinders and all those organizations part of the Loneliness Project. It is my hope that we offer a little inspiration to everyone who passes by our little Chapel.

Peggy Burke



Siam's Story Music Director

I have lived in Aspen for 20 years. My background is in performing arts, psychology, and philosophy, so I understand the impact of music on mental and spiritual health. A few years ago, I longed for a more profound connection to myself and other open-hearted locals, so I visited Nicholas to see how I could contribute. I have since been delighted to serve as the Music Director of the Aspen Chapel.

I actively seek out a diverse range of gifted local musicians to inspire our congregants, and during the summer we are privileged to have some of the most talented young musicians in the world showcase their talents. Bruce, Nicholas and Heather are so supportive of my ideas to contribute to the inclusive Sunday services and I am very grateful for this fulfilling privilege.

I believe wholeheartedly in the Chapel's mission to uplift, inspire, and enhance the lives and diverse perspectives of everyone who comes through its doors. I aim to ensure that the music reflects this wise and noble mission.

Siam Castillo

This will be an exciting year for the Aspen Chapel Gallery. Starting in June, 2025, the gallery will be celebrating 40 years of showing the art of local and Roaring Fork Valley artists. Plan on helping us celebrate this anniversary with the opening of the 259th exhibition, CLIMATE, May 28.

The 39th year had 9 shows including the 4 Rivers Biennial, a juried show open to all artists in the valley.

Our nonprofit partners included The Sopris Sun, The Aspen Historical Society, High Rockies Harm Reduction, Teaching Artists Program of the Aspen Art Museum, Summit 54, The Aspen Sister Cities Bariloche Artist Exchange Program, Connect!, Holiday Baskets, and Aspen, Basalt, Roaring Fork, Colorado Rocky Mountain School, and Glenwood Springs high school art departments. We were able to donate \$11,317 this year giving the Gallery a total of \$79,378 in donations back to nonprofits and the school art programs.

The core of the gallery are the volunteer curators – Amy Beidleman, Kathy Honea, Sam Louras, Glen Watts, and Doug Graybeal who retired at the end of the year. Curt Carpenter is the guest curator for 2025.

The Roaring Fork Valley is blessed with so many talented artists and we are pleased to be one of the only galleries dedicated to showing their art.





Tom's Story

Gallery Director

The Aspen Chapel Gallery has been part of my life for 40 years. I was the director for 16 years and currently with co-director, Michael Bonds. A part-time job, it is every day. Partnering with nonprofit organizations rejuvenates me and allows the Gallery to give back to the community.

My true passion is theatre, specifically set and lighting design. Somehow, I have managed to co-direct the gallery and still design shows – 237 to date – 162 in Aspen or the Valley.

Relationships feed me – my wife Donna, son Derek, his wife Le, grandchildren, Kai and Asher, and many friends in Aspen, the valley, the state and country.

What gets me up in the morning is the chance to be creative.

I came to Aspen in 1970 when people were coming to “drop out.” It felt like a place where I could get involved and pursue my creative passions. I thought, I can “drop in.”

Tom Ward



Michael's Story

Gallery Director

I am a ceramic artist and graphic designer living and working in Aspen, Colorado. My passion for art is growing, changing and continually evolving with my personal growth. Moving to the Roaring Fork Valley in 1985, I have worked in the advertising design field for over 40 years. In the past 10 years, one of my creative outlets has involved co-directing the Aspen Chapel Gallery with Tom Ward. This opportunity has allowed me to work with other artists in the Roaring Fork Valley and I enjoy the collaboration. The best parts of this job are working with other artists to put together shows that display the unique style of each artist and partnering with a diverse group of non-profits to fundraise for their various causes. These opportunities have broadened my understanding of the people in our community and have been an inspiration for me as a person and artist.

Michael Bonds



Marixa's Story

Children's Work

Being part of the Aspen Chapel community fills my heart with so much joy especially spending Sunday mornings with the wonderful kids at Sunday School. Their creativity and curiosity shine through as we explore fun crafts and projects, play fun games, and have thoughtful conversations. Watching them learn, laugh, and express themselves makes each Sunday a true joy.

Marixa Pena



Sabrina's Story

Children's Work

I am blessed to connect with the community and offer Bible stories and crafts to our beloved children. Our teachers including Marixa and Noey guide the class through the creative process bringing about a greater understanding of our spiritual path.

Sabrina Dreffer



Mimi's Story

Yoga and Meditation

For more than ten years my daughter, Mary Cate, and I have had the opportunity to offer community-based yoga in the sacred space of the Aspen Chapel sanctuary.

We are so grateful! Each Tuesday evening a dedicated group gather to journey inward by practicing physical postures (asana), refining our breath (pranayama), quieting our minds, and meditating.

Please join us! We would be glad to guide you to a place of infinite nourishment and inner peace.

Mimi Hauenstein



Heather's Story Contemplative Work

Sharing a focus and purpose with Nicholas is one of the great joys in my life, and not a day goes by when I don't realize that its thanks to the Aspen Chapel, and this wonderful community, that we get to live here. I think of the Chapel as the ever-present context for our being here, my geographical grounding place. I think of my work more as a lifestyle than a job. I share my time between the Chapel – leading services and meditation, and my own Wisdom guidance work within a wider community, mainly across America. I am more convinced than ever that the only way to bring about any paradigm shift in consciousness, and the only way to bring about any substantial change in the world is by our individual and collective efforts of contemplation AND action - by which I mean the consistent cultivation of an inner stance towards love, leading to and fueling our every action. We cannot have one without the other, and we must all find our unique balance. That is what my life is about and I'm so grateful to be able to share this vision in and with the Chapel community.

Heather Vesey



WISDOM FROM THE
TOP OF THE WORLD



Aspen Chapel
a spiritual home for everyone

2024 MINI-RETREAT PROGRAM

THE VOICE OF THE FEMININE



Shira
Stutman
February 1st



Cynthia
Bourgeault
February 17th & 18th



Ilia
Delio
April 13th & 14th



Heather
Vesey
April 27th and 28th



Susan
Aposhyan
May 18th & 19th

We held our second retreat series in 2024. Over 500 people attended, either in person or online. These events build community, with people volunteering, and participating in many different ways. We also develop relationships with the speakers that go on to create new avenues for us to explore with them, such as participating in our Aspen Initiative. Thank you to all of you who joined in.

WISDOM FROM THE TOP OF THE WORLD



Our new website has hosted Marianne Williamson and created the 'Aspen Initiative'. The Webinar was seen by over 12,000 people and enabled us to build a list of 2,000 people that we can email.

This has enabled us to break out of the 'Aspen bubble' and speak to people all over the country.

We built this from the relationships that we have developed with spiritual leaders over the years, and this has given us a reputation for organizing and executing dynamic ideas that make an impact.



We have also initiated the 'Aspen Explorers Club' to bring more speakers to town.



Hilary's Story Development Work

The Chapel has been in my life off and on for years, beginning with my grandfather who was a Sunday regular for many years. After my grand-mother passed away, he donated the simple but beautiful wrought-iron table for the Chapel's garden—a place where he often sat to ponder the marvels of the world and nature.

I have always been interested in being of service in some way. As a mother to two young men, Sam and August; a wife and partner; and as a loyal friend to many, I am guided by the motto of my former high school alma mater: *"Esse Quam Videri"*—in essence, *"To Be and Not to Seem."*

It's a phrase that sums up my life philosophy; from there, I weave in passion, purpose and spirit.

As Head of Development, I hope to create more programs that inspire through compassionate actions and humble purpose so the Aspen Chapel can remain a refuge of hope and inspiration.

Hilary Stunda