

## 2025 Annual Meeting Report

Owen Clymer

The 2025 Annual Meeting of the Southwest Conference UCC was held May 1-3 in Albuquerque, NM. Casas Adobes was represented by delegates who attended virtually: Owen Clymer, Chris Sternberg, and Elodie Winger and by our clergy Rev. Michael Bush and Rev. John Angiulo.

The theme of the conference was *Starting Where We Are: Creating Community in Chaotic Times*. Activities on Friday included workshops on *Building Bridges, Not Barriers: 'Calling In' for Understanding and Justice* presented by the Committee for Decentering Whiteness, *Self-Care in Chaos* by Lynne Hinton, and *Immigration Policy and Rights in 2025* by the New Mexico Immigrant Law Center. Also on Friday, there was a worship service for the installation of Associate Conference Ministers Rev. Dr. Gloria Smith and Rev. Dr. Derrick Elliott held at First Congregational Church UCC.

On Saturday, there was a worship service with keynote speaker Rev. Traci Blackmon preaching on the biblical stories of Puah and Shiphrah who were Hebrew midwives who defied Pharaoh's order to kill male Hebrew newborns. By preserving the lives of countless children during Egypt's oppression, they played an essential role in the history of Israel. Dr. Blackmon's message was to keep faith during these difficult times because God is with us. During the service, Communion was served. The collected offering during the worship service supported The Open Table Connection, a campus ministry of LGBTQIA+ affirming Christian Churches committed to listening, learning and supporting the spiritual journey of young adults in the University of New Mexico and Central New Mexico communities.

During the business meeting on Saturday, Consent Agenda items that were approved included SWC Moderator's report, Personnel Committee report, reports from the Committees on Church and Ministry A, Church and Ministry B and the minutes from the 2024 Annual Meeting. The budget for 2025-2026 was presented and approved. Most of the revenue in the budget comes from investments; expenditures are similar to the previous budget and will result in an approximate \$270K deficit. Last year, the deficit was mitigated by the receipt of a very large contribution. The next action taken on the meeting agenda was the election of nominees for positions on the Executive Board and Committees. These were seconded and approved. Motions from the floor nominated two individuals for vacancies for the 2028 terms on COM B which were seconded and approved.

A resolution calling for the affirmation of basic human rights, including the constitutional right to due process, for immigrants, migrants and refugees detained by the federal government was debated and approved. The resolution, titled Emergency Immigration Resolution 3.31, also affirms the religious and constitutional rights of all Immigrant

Welcoming and sanctuary congregations to serve immigrants. A subsequent motion for the SWC to bring the resolution to the UCC National Setting was approved. A second emergency resolution was presented by Rev. Sabrina Jennings denouncing the actions of the State of Israel and subsequently, by its support, the United States government, that targets the killing of civilians, medical workers and journalists during the conflict in Gaza. This resolution calls on the UCC to adopt a Declaration for an End to Genocide in Palestine. The motion to adopt the resolution was seconded and after some debate was approved. It was noted that the Standing Rules allows an individual to bring an emergency resolution to the floor. A subsequent motion for the SWC to also bring this resolution to the UCC National Setting was approved.

The meeting was closed in prayer by the Conference Minister Rev. Dr. Toni Hawkins. A motion to adjourn was made and seconded at ~12:30 pm MST.