



SANDIA
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

2024 Mission Study

Compiled by members of the 2024 Senior Pastor Nominating Committee

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Our Calling

God is changing lives through our congregation at Sandia Presbyterian Church (SPC). We take Christ's call seriously, "...to tell the good news of salvation by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ as the only Savior and Lord."

We work to be a welcoming family of Christ, embracing all of God's people, and reaching out to the community through the sharing of our time, talents, and resources.

We are an energetic community of do-ers who truly enjoy working together to share the Good News of God's grace with our neighbors.

Our Mission

We are committed to making disciples of Jesus Christ through...

- Worshipping God
- Proclaiming the Gospel
- Studying and teaching scripture
- Sharing God's love
- Praying and changing lives

Worship

We worship and serve the one eternal, triune God who rules overall and who has revealed himself in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We worship in two different ways in both traditional and contemporary services on Sunday morning.

Bible

We submit to the teaching of the Bible, which is the written Word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and practice.¹

Good News

We rely on God's grace, most clearly revealed in Jesus Christ, who made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for our sins and the sins of the world on the cross. The Good News is that Jesus Christ is risen and that we are forgiven and reconciled to God. We are saved by God's grace alone.

Christian Life

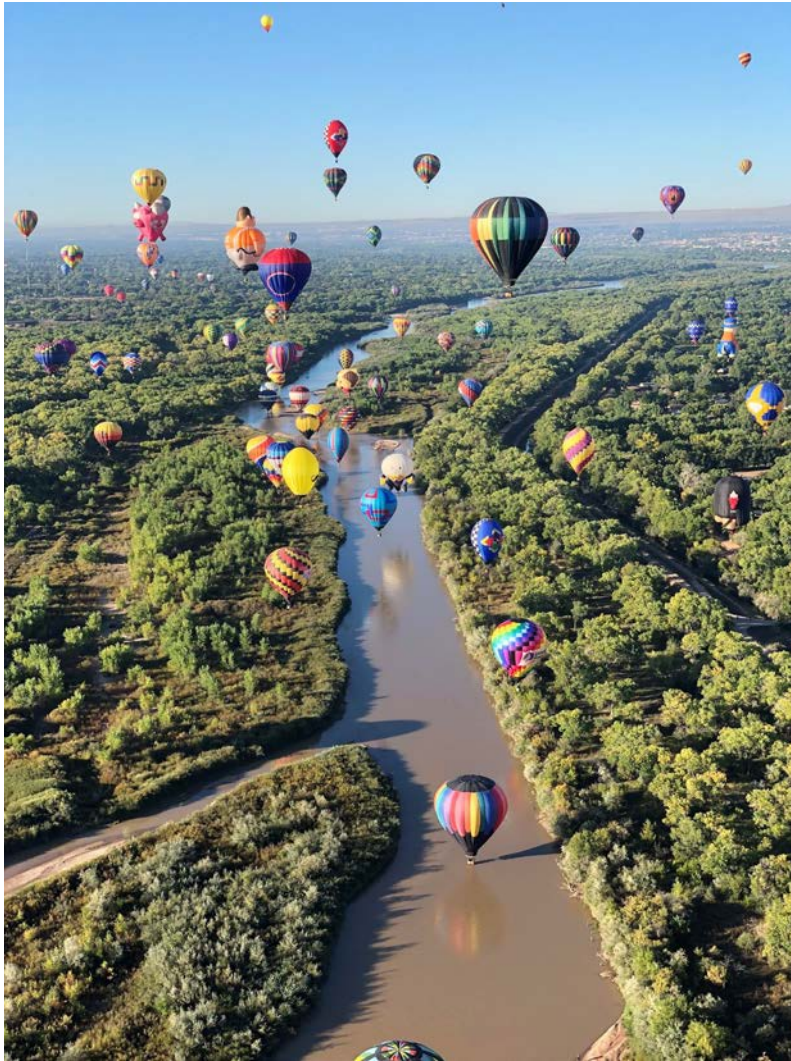
We recognize that the Christian life is a journey. Though we belong to Christ, we continue to struggle. We believe we are all equally guilty of sin and stand in need of grace. We also realize we need to extend grace to each other as we have received grace from God.

¹ See Book of Confessions; Westminster Confession 6.005, 6.009; Scots Confession 3.25

Our Mission Field

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

Cultural Axis



The Albuquerque metro area constitutes the largest population center in the state of New Mexico, with the neighboring municipality of Rio Rancho as the second largest city in the state. There is a strong employment component based upon science and technology, related to Sandia National Laboratory, the Air Force Research Laboratory, and Intel Corporation, as well as Northrop Grumman, Boeing, and Honeywell. The university sector includes the University of New Mexico (UNM) and Central New Mexico Community (CNM) College. Both institutions have student populations of more than 27,000. UNM is the largest university in the state and includes the medical school, colleges of nursing, pharmacy, law, and houses one of the three major hospital systems in the metro area. UNM also offers one of the country's leading cancer research and treatment centers.

Medical services are another economic component of Albuquerque, including UNM,

Presbyterian, and Lovelace Hospitals. Recent growth in employment is related to information technology and the film industry (e.g., Netflix, Amazon Service Center). Other film studios are committed to following this trend, leading to a support base for workers in the production and support of film. Albuquerque promotes its tourism opportunities with the annual Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, reported to be the most photographed event in the world, as well as the world-class Santa Fe Opera, Festival Flamenco Albuquerque, The Gathering of Nations Pow Wow, and the New Mexico United (USL) soccer team. Beyond Albuquerque, New Mexico offers nearby skiing at Santa Fe, Taos, and other resorts and numerous outdoor hiking, mountain biking, multiple camping opportunities, and several cultural sites such as Tent Rocks, Bandelier National Monument, and the Jemez reservation.

The zip code 87122, which encompasses SPC, boasts demographics reflective of educational levels and housing prices for the Northeast Heights. Ethnic diversity is high, based on data that reports the area as primarily 60% White (Non-Hispanic), 25% Hispanic/Latino, and 10% Asian groups. There is a strong two-parent family structure in this area, with advanced education emphasis between parents and children. Parent education level is very high; seventy-one percent (71%) of individuals in this area have college degrees. Many families have advanced degrees, leading to affluence and a significant capability for giving. The dominant categories of households are 36% affluent families, 31% middle American, and 33% young and coming. In contrast, there is interest in faith development consistent with popular culture, with 32% of the 114,000 persons surveyed² expected to be strongly interested in developing their faith. Church style choices are surveyed as somewhat contemporary, with interest lying in recreation and under average preference for any given faith tradition. This is consistent with a very low preference for historic religious affiliation. In the area near SPC, this means that worshippers can transition between churches based on their individual desires, making social connection a factor, as well as theology and preferences in pastoral leadership and sermons.

Geographical Axis



A view of the Sandia Mountain Range as viewed from the West Side of Albuquerque

God has placed SPC in a unique convergence of location, demographics, and opportunity. SPC is located in the Far Northeast Heights of Albuquerque, a metropolitan area of just under a million. Albuquerque is located in north-central New Mexico at the intersection of I-40 and I-25. The church is accessible via Paseo del Norte, a prominent east/west arterial. The Paseo del Norte corridor is exceedingly well-traveled and spans from the foothills of the Sandia Mountains in the east to Albuquerque's "west side", a rapidly growing area of the city.

In our opinion, Albuquerque, with its 5,500+ feet of elevation, is one of America's best-kept secrets. This high-desert setting enjoys more than 310 sunny days each year and the best of each of the four seasons. We have almost no humidity, mosquitos are practically non-existent, and there are no natural disasters to speak of. Although Albuquerque's landscape is

² Ministry Area Profile Report 2021 for 4-mile radius around SPC provided by Percept Group Inc.

predominantly desert, we do get a light dusting of snow in the winter, rainy afternoons in summer, and leaves that change color in the fall. The metropolitan area boasts neighborhoods that can feel more like suburbs than a big city, full of bicycle lanes and paths, hiking trails galore, and walkable neighborhoods where friendly faces offer a smile. . The diversity of the area lends itself to a wide variety of cuisines all within a quick drive from home. Green Chile is New Mexico's state food, and locals are known to put it on just about everything. Albuquerque is a fantastic city for point-to-point driving. Having little traffic to contend with we joke that everything is about 20 minutes away from everything else. The roads are well-maintained and the area in which the church is located has an easy-to-navigate grid of streets. Albuquerque is home to people who enjoy being outdoors all year long. From skiing to rock climbing, to mountain biking, to horseback riding, to year-round golf or tennis, there is no shortage of recreational activities for the outdoor enthusiast. If one hasn't had the pleasure of becoming an outdoors-person they would certainly consider it after spending some time here. Church groups have been known to meet outdoors all year long, even when it requires a fire pit. Albuquerque is a unique place. New Mexico is fondly considered "The Land of Enchantment" due to its natural beauty and diversity of landscape.

Our History

A New Church Development effort began in the Far Northeast Heights area of Albuquerque in 1987. From October 1988 to December 1989, the Presbytery provided for a part-time, pre-organizing pastor, Rev. Dewey Johnson (now our Pastor Emeritus). A General Assembly grant provided necessary funds for him to serve as organizing pastor. The first Sunday morning worship services were held at Dennis Chavez Elementary School. A telephone campaign called "This Phone's For You," was used to gather a congregation and flyers were then sent to interested persons for Celebration Sunday, March 25, 1990. Attendance, which had previously been approximately 40, grew to 300.

SPC held a Service of Organization on October 28, 1990. The immediate goal of the church was to secure a building site and begin construction of the church building. Rev. Johnson described the day the church moved to its present location, "On February 28, 1993, two years and four months after organizing as a church, or nine months after groundbreaking, the worship service in the gym at Dennis Chavez Elementary school was adjourned before the closing hymn and benediction. Worshippers took the folding chairs, which had been stored at the school, with them - as many as could fit in cars plus a couple of pickups full - and drove to the current site of the sanctuary on Paseo del Norte. Once inside,



not only was the arrangement of the chairs a mess, but so was the congregation as they sang the first hymn at the new site. Emotions had caught up with them, tears flowed freely down many cheeks, some choked up. There are not many tangible things that one can point to as the result of church work, but they found themselves standing in one!" To accommodate growth, a portable building was added immediately to provide more classroom space. SPC was among the fastest-growing congregations in Albuquerque in the 1990's ,with a church membership that grew to 1,400 by 2009. In April 1997, SPC successfully issued \$1.3 million in church bonds, with proceeds earmarked to retire existing debt and construct a 6,000 sq. ft. addition, which was

completed in 1997. More land has since been purchased and additional parking added. A new Family Life Center providing recreation, social and athletic opportunities and an education wing providing more classrooms for SPC were added in 2002. In 2016, SPC began and completed a Capital Campaign to build a smaller, more intimate Chapel. The Sunrise Chapel (SRC), pictured above, was completed in 2017 and has been used for Contemporary Services and many other church functions.



SPC Today

Church Population

As of January 1, 2024, our active membership is 950 with a growth of 46 members in 2023.

Worship Opportunities

💡³ 94% of those surveyed recently reported the worship services or activities of this congregation help them with everyday living to some extent or to a great extent.

Our Sunday schedule includes two (2) different worship services, each offering a unique experience for churchgoers. In addition, we have distinct Sunday School and childcare options. While the style of the church service changes throughout the morning, the day's scripture and sermon remain the same.

- Our 9:30am service encompasses traditional liturgical elements, and is accompanied by piano, organ, choir, vocal/instrumental soloists, and occasionally brass and bell choir. It takes place in the Sanctuary, and it is currently streamed via YouTube.
- The 10:45am service is more contemporary, featuring a praise band and youth praise band. It has a more casual tone. Worship is held in the Sunrise Chapel.

³ Lightbulb icons throughout this document denote 2021 stakeholder survey responses.

Attendance

In 2023, in-person service attendance for both services combined average of 405. Average weekly Sunday School attendance was 40-60 children with the highest attendance of 102. Youth Sunday School attendance averaged 24 students, and adult education classes are well-attended with an average attendance of 41.

Administration

Sandia Presbyterian Church operates with two ordained pastors, various Directors of school-aged children and their support staff. Other key positions are in the fields of business, administrative support, music, and facilities.

Our Senior Pastor, Rev. Doug Hucke joined us in April of 2012. Rev. Jeff Pearson received the call of Associate Pastor to SPC in 2015.

Currently our church staff includes:

- Senior Pastor
- Associate Pastor
- Director of Family Life
- Director of Youth Ministry (6th grade-12th grade)*
- Director of Children's Ministries (newborn to 5th grade)
- Director of Music
- Director of Preschool
- Business Manager
- Facilities Manager
- Office Manager
- Pastoral Assistant
- Organist
- Contemporary Worship Leader^
- Administrative Assistant for Children's Ministries
- Receptionist
- Digital Strategist
- Night Host

*A search committee is working to fill the position of Director of Youth Ministry (6th grade-12th grade).

^Position is currently vacant.

The church ministry is overseen by Session (12), Board of Deacons (16-18), and various committee and ministry teams.

We offer Bible studies and classes on Sunday mornings, Wednesday evenings during Wednesday Fellowship, and during the week. Our classes cover a wide variety of topics including biblical studies, theology, church history, spiritual formation, and integrating faith with daily life. See the calendar on our website for more information on class topics, dates, times, and locations.


Wednesday Fellowship nights are special times for food, community, fun, and study, offering you and your family the opportunity to deepen your sense that SPC is truly your "church home." Dinner is served at 5:45pm in the Gym followed by class offerings or programs for all ages at 6:30pm.

For parents and married couples, we offer classes during Wednesday Fellowship and special events to help and equip parents and married couples to thrive amid the challenges they are facing. Our calendar on the website has more information on class topics, dates, times, and locations. Pastor Jeff Pearson and Retired Pastor Frank Shope offer the Prepare/Enrich assessment for engaged and married couples in one-on-one and group sessions.

We have a Young Adult Community Group that meets every Monday evening 6-8:30pm, we meet for dinner and fellowship followed by a book study! Whether you are a 20-something (or close to), in school or in the working world, single, dating or married... we welcome you to our Young Adult Community Group! We believe in the importance of Christian community and in having a safe place to discuss how to live out our faith in Christ!

For those looking for discipleship tools at home, RightNow Media is a Bible study and training content app that provides instant access to a vast library of videos for adults and kids.

Children's Discipleship

 **91% of those recently surveyed chose the Children's Ministry unit as a top area of strength at SPC.**

SPC aims to provide an environment in which children are safe and taught at an age-appropriate level. We want children to feel welcomed, accepted, and loved at SPC. We teach with the goal of children pursuing their own personal relationship with Christ. Activities are intended to help children grow in knowledge and learn spiritual disciplines.

Here are programs we have at SPC to connect children to God and to others with an intent to create a welcoming church community for all involved!

- Sunday School Classes for both Sunday services
- Midweek Teaching through Wednesday Fellowship
- Tween Gathering Once a month (3rd-5th grade)
- Younger elementary gathering once a month (Pre-K – 2nd grade)
- Full summer activities such as Vacation Bible School, Tween Camp, fun days at church and away from church
- Family Events
- Large Trunk or Treat
- Popular Parents Night Out events

While the pandemic brought our children's attendance down to 12-18 children in 2021, we have been able to build our structure and volunteers up to once again having high attendance of 102 in children's

ministry on Easter Sunday 2023. We average 40-60 children on a regular basis on Sunday mornings.



Youth Discipleship

Youth Ministry is designed to teach youth and their families God's love and grace through relationships and community. SPC places a priority on Youth Ministry by walking alongside young people. In addition to learning about their faith, we believe teens need to experience Christ made real through authentic relationships with peers and caring adults mature in their faith. Our staff and volunteer team seek to help youth recognize and acknowledge what God is doing in their lives and to encourage them to share with others details of their spiritual growth.

The youth mission statement combines Matthew 28:19-20a and I Timothy 4:12.

"As a youth ministry, we will go and make disciples by revealing God's word through our speech, actions, love, faith, and purity."

Because teens grow in faith in many different ways, we offer a wide range of settings in which these relationships are provided, such as:

- Sunday morning finds students experiencing faith from a different angle as they gather in classes to study scripture and consider its implications for their daily lives
- Eighth graders undertake an intensive nine-month confirmation journey in which they are challenged to make their faith their own (Each student is accompanied by an adult mentor for the entire journey.)
- Youth assist with Parents' Night Out events when offered

While we are currently in a time of transition in searching for our Director of Youth Ministry, various individuals from the church, including the Director of Family Life, have stepped up to support our Youth. Our current activities include:

- Wednesday Fellowship
- Sunday School

- Winter Retreat
- Summer Mission Wednesdays (local mission)

💡 **81% of those surveyed believe the Youth Ministry is an area in need of continued improvement.**

Young Adult Ministry

This ministry is a community of members in their 20's, 30's, and 40's, who highly value the friendships they've formed at SPC and are finding deeper relationships with God through these friendships.

Two nearly universal themes/pursuits for young adults are "finding authentic community" and answering "meaning of life-" type questions. Young adult ministry attempts to offer Biblical, Christ-centered sources for discussing these issues in a meaningful way.

Music and Worship

💡 **When asked about which ministry units are strong at SPC, 87% of those surveyed chose Music as a top area of strength.**

Music is an integral part of worship at SPC. Currently, there are two Sunday worship services offered, plus an online service which is a recording of the traditional service.

The **9:30 am Traditional Service** has an organ and piano to accompany hymns. The choir sings for eleven months of the year (they break in July). The choir ranges from 30 to 50 singers during the year. Additional music is offered by soloists and ensembles, both vocal and instrumental. The liturgy is different every week and is led by volunteer readers.

The **10:45 am Contemporary Service** offers a clear alternative style of music and worship to the traditional service. The contemporary band includes singers and instrumentalists who are younger adults and teenagers. They play contemporary Christian music for the worship service. The format is simple and non-liturgical. We also have a youth praise band who occasionally leads music for this service.

Both worship services have a children's message taught by an adult each week, except on Communion Sundays, which occur on the first Sunday of each month.

There are several vocal ensembles that provide special musical offerings. The Brassbyterians is a brass quintet that plays at the traditional service four to six times per year. The Bell Choir also plays at least four times per year between October and May. On an interesting note, the concert grand piano was owned by Liberace.

Group Life

SPC has a rich history of small group life. Small group ministries have led us to focus on finding and equipping leaders with vision, tools and a calling to lead small group Bible studies. Many individuals in our congregation have a strong theological background and quite a few groups within our church have been together for more than twenty years. This lends itself to not only studying the Bible together but caring for each other, too.

Congregational Life and Care

Fellowship

Christian fellowship is the cornerstone of life at SPC. We enjoy being together – worshipping, studying, helping others and playing! Some of our church wide activities have included:

- Golf outings
- Baseball games at Isotopes Park
- UNM Lobo basketball and football
- Trunk-or-Treat/Candy Caravan (at Halloween time)
- Family campouts
- Wednesday Fellowship

Fellowship events allow us time to get to know one another and share one of God's greatest blessings – friendship!



The Family Fall Campout is where families camp together in the Jemez family campground to begin the school year.

Deacon Ministry

In addition to pastoral care, our Deacons are passionate about caring for our Christian family and friends. They are a group of 16-18 people, dedicated to providing leadership and encouragement. Some of the services they offer include:

- Transportation
- Food Pantry
- Meals as needed for illness, hospitalization, new babies
- Cards of encouragement for illness, sympathy, congratulations
- Visitations for immediate needs, assisted living, nursing home, to help our members and regular attendees to continue to feel connected to SPC
- Funeral Ministry
- Financial support
- "Handy Helpers" assisting with odd jobs for individuals in the congregation

Stewardship and Resources

In addition to financial resources, SPC emphasizes the stewardship of time and talent. Our congregation is encouraged to actively participate in the life of the church and the community.

Mission and Outreach

💡 **The Outreach Ministries unit was chosen as an area of strength by 82% of those surveyed.**

The SPC Missions Team encourages our congregation to take Jesus' love outside the walls of our church by living out the Second Commandment. We strive for every member to be personally involved, in action, finances and prayer, in at least one ministry outside of SPC. We provide opportunities through the ministries we support.

International Outreach

- Missionaries in Italy
- Support Wycliffe Bible translation into Other Languages
- Living Water International (send teams to countries to drill water wells, teach hygiene, provide Bibles and Christian fellowship)
- Providing solar electrical power to hospital, residents in Maji, Ethiopia



Community Outreach

- International Students Inc. (help foreign students coming to UNM to find and furnish housing, develop friendships with each other and with American Christians, offer Bible study to interested students)
- East Central Ministries (ministry to Albuquerque's International District that provide low cost medical/dental care, urban garden, community activities and care in Christian context)
- Angel Tree
- Rio Grande Food Bank
- Steelbridge (local Christian residency program for chronically homeless persons serious about getting off the streets; includes addiction remediation, educational classes, daily worship, community service)
- A Peaceful Habitation (serving women coming out of prison)
- Camino de Vida Church (Spanish-language church in Albuquerque's South Valley; support with building projects, ESL lessons, financial assistance)
- Team with White Rock Presbyterian, Navajo House of Fellowship in Christian service to Navajo Nation, develop marketable skills for Navajo youth
- Salvation Army - eviction prevention program
- Presbyterian Medical Debt Relief
- The Dream Center - human trafficking outreach in Albuquerque

We support periodic requests throughout the year for clothing drives, food collections, blanket drives, book donations, and more.

Ongoing Programs Provided/Hosted by SPC

- **SPC Preschool** was established in the mid 1990's and serves as an arm of the church reaching preschoolers and their parents in a Christian setting. SPC has been blessed with outstanding leadership allowing the school to grow and be recognized as a 5-Star Preschool certified by the state.

Our Family Life Center (gym) and Sunrise Chapel enables us to reach out in many ways such as the following:

- **Upward Basketball** is a first-class experience that emphasizes the gospel of Jesus Christ. The aim is to provide a safe space to promote growth in all areas of life - physically, spiritually, emotionally, mentally and socially. Our activities align with the Upward mission and purpose. We are in our 22nd year of this program.
- **Dance It Up** is a dance held once a month in our Family Life Center for special needs adults ages 18+. This offers a volunteer opportunity for church members to provide refreshments and hospitality and, of course, enjoy the dancing, too. We are in our 21st year of this ministry!
- **The Great Banquet** was brought to us by our current Senior Pastor, Doug Hucke, and is a three-day Cursillo weekend run by many of our church members and returning participants from nearby congregations. The Great Banquet experience is offered twice a year for both men and women. It is an experience for anyone who wishes to:
 - Strengthen their spiritual life
 - Have a better understanding of prayer, the sacraments, study and Christian action
 - Strive to live a Christian life that bears fruit for God
 - Seek to know Jesus as Lord and Savior and to make Him known

 ***The Great Banquet experience and fellowship groups were frequently mentioned in our recent survey as an important aspect of a sense of belonging and purpose at SPC.***

The Road Ahead

Generational Challenges

SPC faces the challenges that are inherent with generational differences. While we began with many young families in 1990, now our congregation has grown somewhat older. Leaders recognize the need to attract and involve more young families in the programs and mission of our church, while respecting and honoring the long-time members.

Today the first generation is challenged to reach out to engage and equip the next generations. Currently, we feel we have a “base” of good young leadership and are looking to increase that number. Specifically, we are looking to attract more leaders in the 30-50 age group.

Values

A recent demographic study has found that the families within a 4-mile radius of SPC have a desire to put in the time and effort it takes to provide their families with the fundamentals needed to develop their children's generation. We find that SPC shares these values. SPC members also have overall characteristics of concern for achieving educational goals for children, financial security, strong marriage and family dynamics, and fulfillment in work.

💡 **61% of those surveyed responded their current stand on cultural issues is “conservative”, 32% responded with “right in the middle”, and 7% as “liberal”.**

To be successful in future evangelism, SPC emphasizes a relational model with visitors and the community. Recent new members have stated their preference to join the congregation was based on members reaching out and getting to know them directly. Activities, training, and emphasis on welcoming new visitors, neighbors, and the broader community are essential components of the SPC body.

💡 **Many of the survey respondents made it a point to mention, in their open-ended answers, the “people” are the reason they stayed at SPC. They chose to use words such as “friends”, “connection”, and “fellowship” most often.**

The Good News for SPC

💡 **64% agree/strongly agree they “have a sense of excitement about SPC’s future”.**

The people of Sandia Presbyterian are a gregarious, talented, goal-oriented, and an educated group. We are financially blessed and generous toward those in need. People at SPC are spiritually inquisitive and intellectually curious. We are also an active community, filled with service-minded people. These qualities equip our congregation for outreach and growth opportunities. Let the good work continue!

“Jesus said, “Love the Lord with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment, And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Matthew 22: 37-39)