



Aspen Chapel
a spiritual home for everyone

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



Dear Friends,

This year we aimed to increase our numbers of people both attending on Sundays, and live-streaming.

The main way that we have done this is through programming different series for the Sunday morning talks, continuing Heather’s participation in the services, and by generating interest in the Chapel through our speaker program in the spring, and our summer program aimed at visitors to Aspen.

At the beginning of last year we were averaging attendance numbers in the 40s, and now we are averaging in the 60s.

Streaming has increased from an average of 130 to 170. That is across everyone who watches by whatever method (YouTube, live-stream, podcast, etc). But not including Facebook, as that tends to be more erratic. Numbers there hover around 100-150, but some are only on for a short time.

Our (Heather and me) emphasis is really on engaging people to prioritize their spiritual lives, by attendance, meditation, or any other means.

Building community has also been an emphasis. And to that end we set up the supper clubs, the book clubs and engaged members in outreach through The Loneliness Project and the Community Meals that went alongside.

This year we want to develop that sense of community by creating a new directory, so that people can recognize each other more easily, and make contact when they want to.

We will also have the 2024 Retreat Program, and are currently developing other programs and initiatives to serve both the development of community and the deepening of our spiritual engagement.

We so appreciate your attendance and feedback. It makes all the difference!

Nicholas

Nicholas Vesey
Spiritual Leader

Easter on the Mountain



JAN

FEB

MAR

APR

MAY

JUN

Launch of the new
Wisdom from the Top
of the World program



Wear your Pin with
Pride Month



Dear Chapel Friends,

2023 was a year of renewal for our Aspen Chapel Community.

We renewed Nicholas' (and Heather's!) employment contract to extend to June 30, 2028. This was a deliberative process that included raising a supplemental, housing-expense fund. After 10 moves in nine years, the Vesey family will reside in one happy place for six years elapsed time! Huge thanks to the 15 members of our community who pledged the funds!

We had, financially, a solid '23. We broke even on our operational budget while paying higher rent to the building trustees and strengthening our balance sheet reserves. We can now make a strong run over the next 4+ years to reinvent the ACC business model in order to keep things going beyond the Veseys' retirement.

What's in store for '24? See Nicholas' report for starters. And, realize that each new opportunity will require more volunteer – time, talent, and treasure.

May I beg some of your volunteer time by asking you to: go to the new, Aspenchapel.org site; click on "Wisdom From the Top of the World" (WTW); and then click on the James Finley video. His retreat highlights have had over 10K views (from around the world)!

Note also that this WTW prototype-site is being populated with content from: our Retreat series colleagues from last year and this year; the message series that Nicholas has shifted to; and more ideas in the wind.

Questions!

- How might we as a community help to: produce compelling content; promote it globally; and create an economically viable business model?
- Could this venture "scale" and serve the founders' vision (from our mission statement): "Here create a national-global ecumenical center"?
- And, will you please be in touch to help if any of '24's opportunities speak to you?

With Gratitude,



Bruce Merrifield, Administrative Board Chair



Summer "Push"/One of the reasons for coming to Aspen



JUL

AUG

SEP

OCT

NOV

DEC



Garden Parties

Christmas carols and lessons



MUSIC PROGRAM



A note from Music Director Siam Castillo

I am delighted to have arranged the music for Aspen Chapel's Sunday services in 2023. My primary objective is to provide quality music that complements each day's sermon.

Initially, I reached out to various local musicians I have performed with, who were willing to donate their time for exposure or in exchange for use of our space. I also connected with many students and skilled non-professional musicians who were willing to perform for free or at a reasonable cost. After some time in this role, I have compiled a reliable list of talented professionals willing to work within our budget, while maintaining a diverse range of musical styles and instruments. However, their availability isn't always guaranteed, so I continue to seek out new talent throughout the valley. I love giving locals the opportunity to showcase their skills and grow their experience.

Moving forward, my focus is on elevating the overall quality of musical talent, while staying within the confines of our spending limits. I aim to maintain the high standards set by the Aspen Music Festival & School students in the summer throughout the entire year.

ASPEN CHAPEL ART GALLERY

Showing Local Artists and Building Community for 38 Years



Tom Ward
Co-Director



Michael Bonds
Co-Director

Curators:

Amy Beidleman, David Floria, Doug Graybeal, Kathy Honea, Jennifer Johnston-Jones, Sam Louras, Greg Watts

2023 Nonprofit Partners

- 5 Roaring Fork Valley High School Art Departments
- Aaron Roberts-Gray Memorial Scholarship at the Aspen Community Foundation
- Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains
- Harvest for Hunger
- Aspen Center for Environmental Studies
- Independence Pass Foundation
- Pitkin County Library
- Holiday Baskets

8	curated shows
\$60,548	raised since August 2018 to support nonprofits
\$11,895	raised for 7 nonprofit organizations
\$3,250	raised for 5 high school art departments
3	artist talks moderated by Andrew Travers

CHILDREN'S PROGRAM



Over the last year we have prioritized having a program for younger people on Sundays. Numbers have grown from an average of 1-2 a week to 6-7.

We would like to thank both Marixa Pena and Sabrina Dreffer who do so much to help make this all happen.

Our Children's Program is open every Sunday and all are welcome!

ASPEN NOISE

Aspen Noise is an all-inclusive singing group whose mission is to Bring More Joy Into The World. The group sings periodically at Aspen Chapel and other events in the valley. Please join us for one of our performances at the Chapel this year!



**2024
ASPEN NOISE
PERFORMANCES**

March 17- St. Patrick's Day
May 12- Mother's Day
September 1

SUPPER CLUB SERIES

There are 44 people on our Supper Club List, everyone is welcome. New groups of six to eight people (single and couples) are formed three times a year to share dinner. Individuals can participate seasonally or whenever they are in the Valley. Each group organizes and plans their gatherings when it works for their members and everyone contributes to the meal. The host provides the main course, others bring an appetizer, salad or dessert. When guests arrive, the first comment is almost always "Oh, I've seen you at Chapel, we have just never met." From there, the connections multiply for everyone.

Contact Shelly Merriam to get involved (sjmerr@mac.com or 508 942-6278)



INSIGHTS

Insights, led by Barbara Bloemsma, is a co-operative spiritual discovery group. We explore various teachings from religion to science and more. We share our perspectives, recognizing everyone as both student and teacher, and we commune in meditation.

Insights meets via zoom the first Wednesday of each month from 6-7 pm. All are welcome – go to AspenChapel.org to learn more and join us!



CONTEMPLATIVE WORK AND WISDOM FROM THE TOP OF THE WORLD

A Message from Heather Vesey

The main focus for contemplative work in the Chapel was the speaker program last spring. It was amazing to have Jim Finley, Bill Redfield, Cyprian Consiglio and Christian Dillo to kick off the year with us. I was honored to host Bill Redfield's weekend with him. In recent years I've worked a lot with him, creating virtual courses and one-on-one work, guiding and accompanying people in their spiritual lives.



Our whole purpose in last year's speaker series was to encourage us to more deeply commit to a spiritual path, and to develop practices in support of that. To this end, I led services with Nicholas throughout most of the year. We also ran Thursday Satsang over the spring, developing a community of 20-40 each week.

We are now looking towards the speaker program for this year. Having Cynthia Bourgeault, Ilia Delio and Susan Aposhyan will help deepen our understanding of what a contemplative stance in life looks like, and I'm looking forward to introducing people to the Wisdom of Ety Hillesum as part of this series.

2023 SPRING SPEAKER SERIES

MEET THE MODERN MYSTICS



**James
Finley**



**Christian
Dillo**



**Bill
Redfield**



**Cyprian
Consiglio**

JAMES WEBB TELESCOPE EVENT

For the first time we partnered with the Aspen Institute in bringing a speaker to Aspen. In August, Dr. James Bullock gave a presentation on the James Webb telescope entitled 'Looking at ourselves from the beginning of time.' Dr. Bullock is one of the foremost experts on the operations of the telescope. He provided the over 400 attendees with unique insight into the groundbreaking research that is being collected on this mission. The Aspen Chapel was proud to partner with The Aspen Institute to bring the free and open event to the Aspen Community.



MAYAN CALENDER

In August, we also welcomed Carl Calleman, author of 'The Purposeful Universe' to the Chapel to share his knowledge of the Mayan Calendar with our community. 50 people attended and were inspired by Calleman's presentation.

WHAT THE
MAYAN
CALENDAR
TELLS US
WILL
HAPPEN
NEXT



The Chapel has lowered the volume of the chaos that is my life. So much so that my friends and family have seen a significant change in my lack of reactivity. Nicholas' perspective on how to experience the "now" creates a sense of safety that I have never had an opportunity to experience before.

~Louisa Goldsmith



The Veseys at our Garden Party



Christmas Eve Service



Christmas Eve Service



Christian Dillo Wisdom Event

SUNDAY SERVICE THEMES

Every week we meet in the chapel at 9.30am for about an hour. Services include music, some meditation and information and discussion around a current course. In the past we have looked at the subjects of: Pilgrimage, The Zen 10 Oxherding Pictures, The Cosmic Christ and many more.

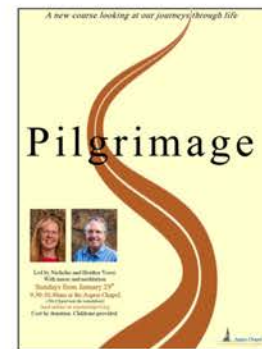
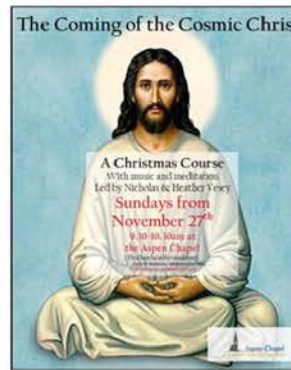
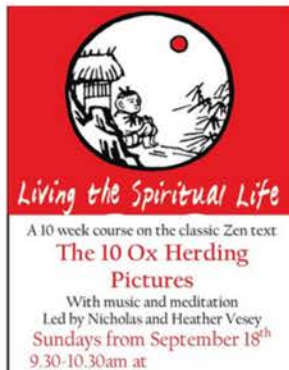
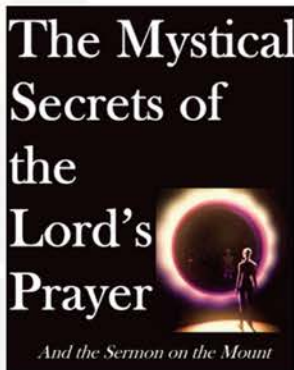


OUR CURRENT COURSE: THE NATURE OF REALIZATION

How do we realize that which is deep within us?
What is the process of making our dreams come true?
This series looks at what is involved in bringing such things to reality.

A new topic is introduced every week and is available to view on our website after for anyone who cannot attend the service.

PREVIOUS COURSES



SUNDAY COURSES ONLINE

In addition to livestreaming our Sunday services, we make them available online for viewing at anytime. For any of the courses listed above, you can find each of the available episodes at AspenChapel.org



Garden Party attendees



Easter on the Mountain



Pet Church



Obadiah Jones & Orian Peled at our Christmas Eve Service

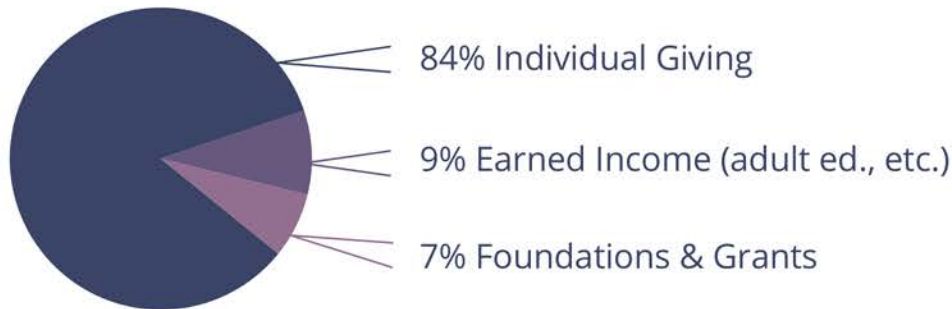


“I became actively involved with the Aspen Chapel following my open heart surgery in 2018. Initially, I came for the meditation classes with Nicholas that coincided with medical appointments at the hospital. I quickly discovered the very moving and personable Sunday Services, excellent live music, fine art gallery and inspiring guest speakers. The Aspen Chapel has become a big part of my spiritual life here in Aspen.”

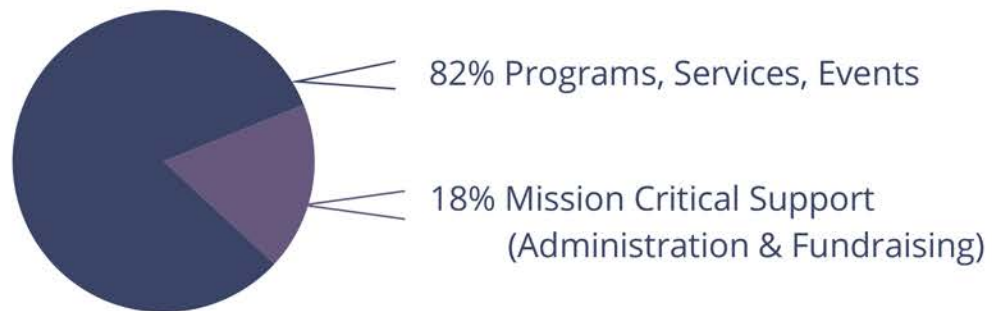
~ Eric Ringsby

FINANCIALS

Total Annual Income: \$580,426



Total Annual Expenses: \$595,334



WE LOVE OUR VOLUNTEERS

The Aspen Chapel also relies on the generous contribution of our community's time! In fact, our community depends on the love and devotion of our volunteers. From weeding the Chapel Gardens, setting up chairs every Sunday, stuffing mailings, organizing the Garden Parties, to serving food at the community meals.

BY THE NUMBERS

418	2023 Donors
35	Event Sponsors
80	Giving Circle Members
50	Volunteers

SPECIAL EVENTS AT THE CHAPEL

March 24

Aspen Chapel Annual Meeting (please join us!)

March 12 - May 28

Vishoka Meditation Course

March 31

50th Anniversary Easter on the Mountain

April 13 & 14

Ilia Delio Wisdom events

April 17

Aspen Chapel Gallery Opening

April 27 & 28

Heather Vesey Wisdom events

May 18 & 19

Susan Aposhyan Wisdom events

July 28

Tim Frantzich Singing Group

Mid-August

Garden Parties

December 15

Lessons and Carols

REGULAR OFFERINGS AT THE CHAPEL

Monthly

Breathwork with Pathfinders

Monthly

Singing Bowls with Pathfinders

Bi-weekly Wed.

Ecstatic Dance (evening event)

Monthly

Group Meditation

1st Wednesdays

Insights

Sundays at 9:30 am

Sunday Services



Check out the events calendar on our website!



2024 MINI-RETREAT PROGRAM

THE VOICE OF THE FEMININE



**Ilia
Delio**

April 13th & 14th



**Heather
Vesey**

April 27th and 28th



**Susan
Aposhyan**

May 18th & 19th