

Episcopal Church in Navajoland (ECN)

Youth Ministry Report: Children, Youth & Young Adults

Presented to the Church Convention

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Children's Program at Convocation

During the 2024 Convocation in the San Juan Region, we launched a small but meaningful children's program. Two volunteers, having completed Safe Church Training, led the group using a curriculum tailored for older children, though participants ranged in age. Six children attended. Out-of-state volunteers generously donated snacks and craft supplies, helping to keep the children engaged through projects and meaningful conversations. The day concluded with lunch and two rounds of bowling at the local bowling alley.

The 2024 Giving Tree

Our second annual Giving Tree Project was a great success. Over 100 children received Christmas gifts, thanks to three dedicated church partners and numerous individual sponsors. These supporters signed up to purchase gifts for children in Navajoland, following a process that began with a wish list and ended with volunteers wrapping and distributing gifts across all regions.

This project serves children from birth through high school. Planning for the 2025 Giving Tree will begin in the fall, starting with a "Save the Date" announcement and a sign-up form for families.

Safe Church Training

Safe Church Training remains both a priority and a challenge within ECN. In 2024, we provided free access to online training through Praesidium. With support from Communications & Cheii, individuals received help setting up accounts and navigating the platform.

Safe Church Training is required for anyone working with children or the public. This year, several groups coming into Navajoland for Vacation Bible School (VBS) and volunteer work were successfully trained. We are committed to expanding this effort to ensure all key individuals in our ministry are equipped to create safe, welcoming spaces for our young people.

Current Collaborations & Partnerships

We are excited about a budding partnership with the Diocese of the Rio Grande, which has expressed interest in collaborating on youth ministry and Christian Formation. Plans include co-hosted conferences, topic-specific training sessions, and shared leadership development.

They have also offered support for participation in Camp Stony – providing scholarships and prayer support – and we look forward to the spiritual and relational growth this partnership will bring.

Other Youth & Young Adult Highlights

- **Cultural Exchange:** Youth and adults from the Utah Region traveled to a church near Washington, D.C., for a cultural exchange. The partnering church hopes to make this an annual event, alternating between hosting and visiting.
- **Scholarships:** Ten college students were awarded scholarships from the Mar Thoma group – five from Navajoland congregations and five from surrounding communities. New applications will open later this month.
- **Youth Representation:** Two young adults, Sedona Jacobson and Ryan Jim, will represent Navajoland at the Mar Thoma Youth Conference in Atlanta, GA, this July. We are grateful for their willingness to participate in this fellowship opportunity.

Looking Ahead: Hopes for Youth Ministry (Children & Young Adults)

- **Computer Labs (Fall Launch)**
Teaching basic computer literacy skills to children and youth.
 - Young Adult Volunteers
- **Safe Church Training Lab Expansion**
Additional regional pop-up events using a newly found, high-quality online curriculum.
- **Resources for Children & Youth**
Purchase of books and learning materials for use in youth programs.
- **Bible Study for Young Adults**
- **Upcoming Projects**
 - Camp Stony: Up to three participants will attend the first session, June 15–21.
 - EYE Preparation: Ongoing regular meetings in advance of the Episcopal Youth Event.
 - 2026 Youth Retreat Planning: Initial groundwork is being laid for a future youth retreat.

The energy, faith, and commitment of our children, youth, and young adults continually bless us. Let's build spaces welcoming to all ages. Thank you to all who support these vital ministries through prayer, service, and generosity.

Respectfully submitted,

GJ Gordy

Communications, Cheii, & Youth

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