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**UKIRK SMU**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**





Connect with us on social media and follow along with our community in the years to come!

@ukirksmu  



Dear Friends,

In this fourth year of UKirk's ministry and presence at SMU, we deepened our roots, explored new possibilities, and continued to create a place where all belong. As a worshiping community, we explored the theme "Grounded & Growing," diving into scriptures that remind us that God is the ground of our being and the source of our growth.

Like a student moving through college, this ministry has matured over the last four years and we've learned so much along the way. We are proud to be fully grounded on SMU's campus, and we are proud that our larger community recognizes that our work of radically inclusive ministry is invaluable. Simultaneously, we continue to grow in beautiful and sometimes unexpected ways. Our budget, our student population, our alumni, and our impact are all expanding, and we rejoice in these signs of growth. At the same time, we continue to cherish the intimate gatherings of small groups of students and seek to preserve the deep connectivity that makes UKirk special. We are grounded in our identity and we are growing as a place that serves all students.

Last fall, we underwent a feasibility study to determine the level of support for a Capital Campaign. Ever the dreamers, our Board of Directors wondered if this might be the time to find UKirk SMU a more permanent physical space on campus, and so we endeavored on a journey of listening and learning. It was a gift to hear your hopes and dreams and to envision the future together! We heard just

how much this ministry means to students, families, alums, and congregations. And we heard that you all want us to continue both broadening and deepening our relationships. While we aren't yet ready to pursue a permanent space, we have recognized that our community extends far beyond the Boulevard and Canterbury House.

And so we have committed to grounding ourselves in relationships, finding home in the continued expansion and growth of our community. We feel excited about where we are and grateful to be in an ecumenical partnership that offers us a physical space to host our growing organization. We remain dedicated to continuing our work of sustainable growth so that generations of students to come will find a home in UKirk SMU. It was a joy to come together for our first fundraising Gala in June to celebrate this ministry with all of you.

God continues to ground us here and now, even as we grow toward a bright future. We give deep thanks for your partnership, your financial gifts, your prayers, and your care. Together, we are creating a place for all to belong.

In peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jessie Light-Wells". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Jessie Light-Wells



Before UKirk, I had never experienced a student ministry whose membership did not require me to change who I was. UKirk is where I found a place to weep, rest, and just be. It is where I found a family of silly, authentic, and affirming individuals. It is where my questions, doubts, and frustrations about faith were encouraged. UKirk didn't just allow me to show up as my complete myself — it asked me to.

—EMMA WHITE, CLASS OF 2023



# Programmatic highlights

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We **welcomed 80 students** this year into our community, offering a fully inclusive and affirming place for all to call home.

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We offered care and meaning-making in **250+ coffees and pastoral care conversations**.

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We **retreated with 20 students** to Mo-Ranch for rest, play, and relaxation over Labor Day weekend in partnership with First Presbyterian Church, Fort Worth. We especially enjoyed stargazing and swimming in the river.

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We **gathered for 22 Sunday worship and dinners**, creating a weekly landing place for weary students to breathe, laugh, eat, and dwell in God's presence. We're so grateful for the 100+ dinner providers who fed our students with nourishing and delicious food!

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We **empowered 11 student leaders** to envision, plan, and build the UKirk SMU program.

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We **raised over \$41,000** on North Texas Giving Day from 76 donors and celebrated your incredible generosity!

# Programmatic highlights, *cont.*

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We **learned together** through our studies of the Gospel of Mark and women in the Bible, and our Advent and Lenten devotionals.

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We **boulevarded (tailgated) on Bishop Boulevard** for Homecoming and Parents Weekend, sharing school spirit with students, families, supporters, and alums.

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We **feasted together** for our Fall Fundraising Breakfast at Northridge Presbyterian Church, sharing gratitude for the support of our community and listening to our students share about the impact of this ministry.

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We **journeyed through a Feasibility Study** with Vandersall Collective, hearing from 58 households about your hopes and dreams for the future of UKirk SMU.

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We **listened to sermons from 5 student preachers** who shared their stories of groundedness and growing and inspired us with their wisdom.

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We **made a pilgrimage with 9 students** to Montreat College Conference, beginning 2023 in the mountains with hundreds of new friends and delighting in the connectional church.

# Programmatic highlights, *cont.*

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We supported the gifts and artistry of our students by bringing our UKirk SMU cheering squad to 25 student events including dance performances, theater productions, research presentations, special interest gatherings, and Pride Visibility Day!

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We celebrated with 19 graduates, sending them into the world with lots of love and a few tears.

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We enjoyed God's creation and local Dallas sites with fellowship events to Oak Point Nature Preserve, Trinity River Audubon Center, and a Dallas Stars Game.

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We engaged in interfaith fellowship by hosting our third annual Ramadan Dinner, collaborating with the SMU Office of the Chaplain and Religious Life and the Muslim Student Association to foster deeper connections across faith traditions.

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We rested with 8 students at Sister Grove Farm during Lent, orienting ourselves toward Holy Week by reconnecting to God's creation and the sacred rhythms of life and death. We loved welcoming two baby lambs into the world on Palm Sunday.

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We hosted the Homecoming of Your Dreams, our first ever fundraising gāla in June and raised over \$46,000! We danced, posed for the photo booth, enjoyed good food and great company, and partied hard!



UKirk SMU provided me with a space to find community, support, and refuge when I needed it the most at SMU. The pastoral care and friendship I received helped me navigate through the most challenging experience in my life, and I do not know how I would have made it through without the support of the UKirk community.

—TRAVIS WHITACRE, PHD, CLASS OF 2023





# Budget vs Actual

REVENUE	ACTUAL	BUDGET
Individual Contributions	\$82,837.00	\$102,000.00
Nonprofit & Foundation Contributions	\$10,463.43	\$11,000.00
Grants without Restrictions	\$60,000.00	\$90,000.00
Grants with Restrictions	\$18,400.00	\$10,800.00
Program Service Fees	\$1,200.00	\$1,000.00
Interest	\$143.00	\$0.00
Special Events - Non-Gift Revenue	\$35,504.00	\$0.00
Special Events - Gift Revenue	\$7,183.00	\$0.00
Special Events - Direct Costs	-\$11,966.00	-\$2,000.00
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>\$203,764.43</b>	<b>\$212,800.00</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>		
Salaries & Related Expenses	\$89,338.00	\$95,995.00
Contractors - General	\$62,745.00	\$72,500.00
Accounting	\$4,920.00	\$5,535.00
Preaching & Music Honoraria	\$500.00	\$700.00
Supplies	\$1,604.00	\$1,000.00
Food & Refreshments	\$6,232.00	\$7,750.00
Postage & Shipping	\$563.00	\$800.00
Printing & Copying	\$1,648.00	\$500.00
Subscriptions	\$1,146.00	\$1,000.00
Travel and Retreats	\$16,288.00	\$16,120.00
Professional Expenses	\$495.00	\$1,750.00
Insurance - Non-employee Related	\$1,937.00	\$1,600.00
Bank Fees	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
Advertising Expenses	\$2,638.00	\$3,630.00
Business Taxes & Licensing Fees	\$243.00	\$250.00
Other Business Expenses	\$321.00	\$0.00
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$190,618.00</b>	<b>\$210,130.00</b>
<b>NET REVENUE</b>	<b>\$13,146.43</b>	<b>\$2,670.00</b>



UKirk has really provided me with community and support the last two years in college. It is so great to be in an affirming space and know that I can be authentic and accepted. I would not be the person I am without UKirk as it has given me space to rest and laugh and commune with other students. I know that I am not alone because of my UKirk community.

— MELISSA WHITLER, CLASS OF 2023



# Donor thank you

We are grateful for all who have made contributions to our life together. We have done our best to provide accurate donor records. If you see something that needs a correction, please write to [ukirksmu@gmail.com](mailto:ukirksmu@gmail.com).

## \$1-\$249

Anonymous (7)  
Laurie Anderson  
Jenna Babbitt  
Jim Ball  
Bethany Bass  
Fernando Berwig Silva  
Mary Kate Bevel  
Phyllis Bevel  
Mark & Michele Brainerd  
David & Kendall Brown  
Lance Burns  
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# Donor thank you, *cont.*

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Preston Hollow Presbyterian Church

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First Presbyterian Church of Dallas Foundation  
Second Presbyterian Church, Indianapolis, IN  
Linda Shirley

## \$10,000-\$25,000

Anthony Family Foundation  
1001 New Worshipping Communities  
(Presbyterian Mission Agency)  
Aaron Zeman

## \$25,000+

Grace Presbytery



UKirk started as a safe haven for me: a way to get away from the stress of life and be surrounded by a group that was filled with kindness and love. It grew to be so much more and has allowed me to find a community of people who felt the same way about their faith as I did. I'm so grateful for all of it!

—ZACK KUSHUBAR, CLASS OF 2023

