

SY 23-24

# Annual Report

UKIRK NASHVILLE  
PRESBYTERIAN CAMPUS MINISTRY, INC.

UKirk Nashville  
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# We had a great year.

## **The 2023-2024 school year was about deepening fellowship.**

UKirk Nashville's numbers held steady, including students from Vanderbilt, Belmont, and occasionally other schools. About half of regularly attending students had a prior connection to the Presbyterian Church (USA) or Cumberland Presbyterian Church; others came from a diversity of Christian traditions, as well as from no tradition at all. Attendance among a core group was very consistent, such that a bonded community was able to form, and we have excellent, committed student leadership for academic year 2024-2025.

## **As always, we sought to meet students where they are and help them grow in their faith.**

Students responded enthusiastically to this year's content, which was intended to meet the unique spiritual needs of their age and stage. In the course of the year, we explored theological "hot topics," the basics of Presbyterian theology, the Enneagram, and Jesus's most essential moral teachings in the Sermon on the Mount in contemporary context.

## **Service and social justice ministry made a comeback.**

Students served together more than in any year post-pandemic. We joined Westminster Presbyterian Church for their fall Habitat for Humanity build and participated in the Martin Luther King Joint Day of Service with students from various Nashville schools. UKirk also hosted a panel on social justice with local ministers and organizers and participated in advocacy against gun violence.

**UKirk Nashville had another strong year financially.** Fundraising efforts were successful, and we finished the year with a \$4K surplus due to generous giving and prudent stewardship. These funds will be poured back into ministry in 2024-2025. We also saw church partnerships deepen, with several more congregations giving and volunteering than in recent years.

***Our Mission:*** UKirk Nashville exists to provide area college students a place for Christian community and spiritual growth by: deepening relationships through fellowship, experiencing God through worship, and encouraging discipleship through service.

# We have you to thank.



**We are grateful to all the churches that made it possible. Churches that contributed time, talents, and treasure this year were**

- Bellevue Presbyterian Church
- Downtown Presbyterian Church
- First Presbyterian Church (Franklin)
- First Presbyterian Church (Nashville)
- Harpeth Presbyterian Church
- Hillsboro Presbyterian Church
- Second Presbyterian Church
- Trinity Presbyterian Church
- Westminster Presbyterian Church
- Woodland Presbyterian Church

We also owe a debt of gratitude to our supporting presbyteries and synods in the Presbyterian Church (USA) and Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

# Students say it best...

On our end-of-year student survey, here's what students had to say:

**"I appreciate the community of UKirk.** I feel so welcomed by everyone at each event and feel like I can really be myself."

**"What I value most about UKirk are the relationships.** It's lovely to have friends that I can not only casually hang out with, but [with whom I] can really discuss faith and other complex, potentially hard things."

**"UKirk does a lot of things really well,** particularly community building and providing a place of conversation with communication and no judgment. I am still not sure about my faith, and I don't know the Bible very well, but I am learning and having conversations that have helped me understand certain things in a clearer way."

**"I most value the connections that I have made and the relationship that I have been able to grow with Jesus."**



# Abby's Story

Abby English (Belmont '24), UKirk Nashville's 2023-2024 Student Vice-President, shared her experience of our ministry during our Soul & Spirits fundraiser in April. Here is some of her story, in her own words.

*"When Claire [the campus minister] invited me to try UKirk, I was hesitant. But I went. And I kept going. And I never want to stop. There was no learning curve, no adjustment period. From the moment I sat down at Bongo Java for coffee that first Wednesday, I felt like part of the group. UKirk welcomed me with open arms, and I never felt like I was intruding on something that was already established. Their enthusiastic welcome was the driving force behind my commitment to the group.*

*But UKirk isn't just a social group. It's a faith-based community. Faith is something I've gone back and forth with over the years. I've never thought of myself as anything other than Christian, but before joining UKirk, I was a little lost. Finding this community and interacting with people my own age who aren't just Christian, but actively and wholeheartedly Christian, has changed the way I look at religion. I'm not saying that we don't have space for people who are still figuring it out. I can confidently say that I have learned the most from my peers who are questioning their faith, because they challenge me to question the conclusions that I have made about my faith and ultimately become even more sure."*

**"UKirk is hands-down the best thing that has happened to me during my time at Belmont, and my experiences with these people will stay with me for the rest of my life."**



# The Year in Numbers

**32+**

## STUDENTS

Several dozen students were served at UKirk events in 2022-2023, with around 20 participating regularly by the end of the year.

**\$117K**

## ANNUAL REVENUE

Our partners' faithfulness made 2023-2024 a high revenue year; we finished in June with a \$4K surplus.

**10**

## LOCAL CHURCH PARTNERS

Congregations of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and Cumberland Presbyterian Church gave time, funds, and/or volunteers.

**\$113K**

## ANNUAL EXPENSES

Conscious spending, focused on our main ministry priorities, kept our expenses within our means.



**\$26.8K**

## IN INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS

Generous individuals give above and beyond what our churches contribute. This was our most successful fundraising year in dollars for the second year in a row. We also saw our highest number of giving households (72) since 2016.

# On the Horizon



**UKirk is moving into a new office.** In May 2024, UKirk was asked by Vanderbilt University to vacate our office at their Center for Spiritual and Religious Life (CSRL). This decision, which affected other campus ministries as well, is part of a broader plan to redevelop Central Campus that will eventually include the demolition of CSRL. While some staff offices will be replaced, the university does not plan to replace UKirk's office. We have chosen to see this challenge as an opportunity. In October 2024, we will move into a new office at the Scarritt Bennett Center, located in the Edgehill neighborhood, between Vanderbilt and Belmont, the two campuses we most serve. We believe our new office will be more accessible to all and look forward to discovering its full potential for ministry. Our friends and supporters should note that for worship, we will continue to meet at St. Augustine's Chapel, as we have for many years. Furthermore, for the time being, we can still receive mail at our Vanderbilt address.

**Our board is reflecting on our mission, vision, and values.** Going through changes has made us think about the "big picture." What is UKirk's purpose? Are we meeting the needs of *today's* college students? Most of all, who is God calling us to be at this moment in time? Our 2024-2025 Board of Trustees is already working together to explore these essential questions and plans to share more soon.

Thank you for your faithful  
support of our ministry.  
Here's to another great year!

**The 2024-2025 UKirk Nashville Board of Trustees**

Rev. Dr. Rachel Thompson Orfield, Chair, Harpeth Presbyterian

Dr. Nathaniel Freymeyer, Vice-Chair, UKirk Alumnus

Ms. Kelly Christie, Secretary, Westminster Presbyterian

Dr. Ryan Fox, Treasurer, First Presbyterian Franklin

Ms. Tania Carter, Second Presbyterian

Rev. Lee Catoe, *Unbound*, Presbyterian Mission Agency

Dr. Bill Christie, Westminster Presbyterian

Ms. Barbara Fay, Woodland Presbyterian

Dr. Brent Graham, Second Presbyterian

Rev. Shane Smith, Hillsboro Presbyterian

Rev. Taylor Young, St. Luke Cumberland Presbyterian

Rev. Claire Berry, Executive Director and Campus Minister

**Please contact us to learn more about UKirk Nashville**

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