



**2022 Annual Report  
of The Crossing  
@ Cathedral Church of St. Paul  
Date: January 19, 2023**

**Priest's Report**

Hello friends! How are you doing? In honesty, 2022 was a bit hard on me. It certainly had some really good moments that I'll tell you about in a moment. And I feel it is important to note and speak the hard stuff. In a recent Crossing small group discussion, a group of leaders talked about the grief of being a transient community and the difficulty there is in falling in love with The Crossing only to have it ever changing. We noted that holding that grief in community is important to name. So here we are.

Around Easter time I started experiencing quite a bit of burnout. I want to be an endless well of support for our community, but I found myself not able to do so anymore. I was still showing up (mostly) and over-functioning (sort-of), but I wasn't really there. My heart wasn't there. Around Pentecost, I and the band took a covid respite to finally rest from the extra burdens we endured during the pandemic. It was really only then that I saw how bad the burnout was and realized that my way of working at home, at church, in life, had to change.

I wish that I could tell you that I fixed everything and that I'm 100% better and back. To be true to myself and to you, it's still difficult to change the way we operate, the way we function and expect others to function. And I feel especially drawn to share this because I know that many crossing folks experience burnout on a regular basis and I want us to be a source of change. I can tell you that as I work through all this, the leaders at the crossing have stayed true to our foundational value of Radical Welcome. I've been welcome just as I am. And it has reinforced my commitment to leaders who are exhausted to step back when needed and to change as we figure out how to lead in a new way that doesn't use one another in consumeristic ways. This cornerstone value of Radical Welcome, showing up how we are and changing one another through how we lead, has guided me as I navigate choppy waters.

Some of the most life-giving work for me at the crossing has been visioning our program year. A larger leadership group of us gathered this summer to think bigger and consider what we wanted to see at the crossing. We wanted everything that we do in the next year to be tied to something we are seeking. Turns out, we were seeking to build a home together, a family together, and we wanted to use our stories to build that home. So we developed our Program Year theme: Home: Building Belonging through Shared Stories. We began with our values that provide a steady foundation to building home and moved through designing our home and making room for guests, in our home and hearts. We asked ourselves, "what is home to me?" We honored those that are foundational to us, shared stories of our queer experiences that made us who we are. We

committed to spend our Second Saturdays outside of worship building our relationships together. We opened our doors to the public to host a Queer Storytelling event. We welcomed home our founder, Rev. Steph, to hold us in prayer and spiritual practice in Advent to allow us space to hold the creative mystery of God's belovedness within us. This community was a buoy for many this year in grief, burnout, and fear of what this world will be in light of the pandemics we've been enduring.

Which brings me to our vision. Some newer members in our community may not know that we set out a five-year vision in 2020. Many cannot tell you what that vision is. Our vision is below my report, but in short, we dreamed a dream that The Crossing would be better known and more easily found, that we would be an example of a whole and healthy Christian community not falling to toxicity and cynicism, that we would be an anti-racist community and have that be real, true, and honest, and that we would be connected and strengthened by our relationships, that we would grow spiritually, through small groups and communications. This past year, this reconnection to one another and desire to be a stronger community, even when we feel broken, is a part of our vision.

In every report below, you will see glimpses of this vision being lived out. Through our Lenten Series on racial justice and reparations, through our home building, through our Queer Storytelling, through our small groups, through our grieving and healing, we are living this vision. And, we want to be a little more intentional in living this vision in the next couple years. We are half way through our 5-year vision. 2.5 years ago, we cast this vision without a strategic plan to accomplish it. Yes, we set goals for the congregation and council and priest for one year, but we didn't set ourselves up for success. Now, we are still living through a pandemic, so maybe we were a bit optimistic and part of our strategic plan needs to be assessing our ability to accomplish this vision. But we can set our goals and tasks toward this kindom, this little fraction of it anyway.

I hope you take some time with this vision below and find yourself in it. Whether you knew this was our vision or not, I can tell you, every single one of you, how you have lived this vision already. So let's do it intentionally and know what we can do and be that kindom come! I can't wait to change and grow and rest and play and lead with you. Thank you for being The Crossing.

Faithfully submitted by The Rev. Tamra Tucker (Priest/Lead Organizer)

### **Five-Year Vision @ the crossing**

In September of 2020, The Crossing community met to envision our future. With a permanent priest and a renewed sense of grounding with the cathedral, we are ready to envision what and who the crossing seeks to be in the future. We created four 5-year goals and set smaller, achievable one-year goals that are attainable for a small congregation living in the midst of world-breaking pandemics. We believe our goals are specific to us, and complement our role as a congregation of the cathedral seeking to embrace brave change through reimaging our liturgy, building our relationships, and engaging our world.

Now (two and one-half years, halfway through) into our Five-Year Vision, we reflect on what we have accomplished, where our challenges are, and what (if anything) needs changing.

In 5 years:

We, the crossing, aim to:

1. Be known in the wider church and community as a church that works for justice and is a place of welcome for the marginalized. People don't have to look far to find us. We are a church on the margins.
2. Return to and deepen an expression of Christianity that is healthy and whole - we aim to be a model of Christianity that is a positive inspiration to others, a mender of the breach (not falling to toxicity and cynicism).
3. Be able to proclaim ourselves as an anti-racist congregation and have it be true and real and honest, with an emphasis on
  - strong mutual aid, and
  - more explicit conversations of money and resources - (i.e. reparations).
4. Create a thriving community culture with a strong network/ways to connect, building community (including through small groups) and growing spiritually.

In previous years, The Crossing has set one-year goals for the congregation, council, and priest for each of the four pillars. It is now time to revisit, review, and revise our goals so that we can meet or amend our 5-year vision.

**Reflection Questions:**

1. Which goal are you most drawn to?
2. Where/How have you found yourself living into one of these goals? (To make the crossing better known or more easily found, to be an example of a whole and healthy Christian community to others, to be an anti-racist community, to be better connected to and grow spiritually with one another?)
3. What are you excited to do in the next year? In the next 2.5 years?

Some of the goals we have set and accomplished include (by category):

*1) Be known in the wider church and community as a church that works for justice and is a place of welcome for the marginalized. People don't have to look far to find us.*

- Within the pandemic, we leaned into the online component better than most churches. We worked with a consultant to rebrand the crossing and build a new website that guides new people into connection.
- Tamra has connected with new religious leaders and communities to broaden the name and values of the crossing.

*2) Returning to and deepening an expression of Christianity that is healthy and whole - we aim to be a model of Christianity that is a positive inspiration to others, a mender of the breach.*

- Council begins each meeting with spiritual practices to center and connect us to one another. They have leaned into difficult discussion with trust and vulnerability rather than toxicity and defensiveness.
- The congregation holds space for grief in addition to healing knowing that they are interdependent experiences in life.
- Priest and council have monthly check ins on the health of the community.

*3) Be able to proclaim ourselves as an anti-racist congregation and have it be true and real and honest, providing strong mutual aid and more explicit conversations of money and resources - reparations.*

- Radical Welcome, at its core, is anti-racist. And, we still have to pay attention to moments that hold the tension of radical welcome/anti-racism and white complacency. We've done that in congregational spaces through small groups, a collaboration with Emmanuel Church to do the Sacred Ground curriculum, and held space for difficult and powerful listening from our members of color. We've committed to tithing some of our budget to organizations of color to aid their mission and our vision, giving to organizations like Trans Resistance MA, focused on Trans People of Color.
- The council has held space in nearly every council meeting to consider two questions in relation to the [Racial Justice Audit](#)'s 9 patterns of racism in the Episcopal Church.
- Tamra sits on the reparations subcommittee for the diocese and drafted and spearheaded the creation the reparations toolkit for the diocese. The committee also held listening sessions diocesan wide, passed a resolution to form an \$11.1 million reparations fund, and has committed to being in every congregation to train congregations in using the toolkit. She shared her work through reflections, council meetings, and 1:1s and represents the crossing at all reparations activities.

*4) Create a thriving community culture with a strong network of events/ways to connect, building community (including through small groups), and growing spiritually.*

- The congregation/worship circle created a liturgy for the blessing of little ones to welcome our younger members, tried on new small groups, and leaned into our community events this past fall.

- Through sharing our stories, we have leaned into building our relationships.
- The council committed to having 1:1 conversations with community leaders and investigated communication options like slack to build our communications, and lifting up new leaders in the community.
- Tamra offers co-facilitation training for new leaders, spends 1:1 time with new leaders to develop skills, spends time in pastoral visits and small group development to build stronger community.

How did we do?! What do we want our next year's goals to be? What do we want to change/improve? Where do you find yourself in the vision?

### **Council**

2022 was a very exhausting year for the Crossing Council, along with our beloved community. At the start of the year, the Council consisted of M LeClerc (Treasurer class of 2022), Rebecca Spengler (Chapter rep), Penny Wilhelm (At Large class of 2023), Rev. Tamra Tucker (Priest and Lead Organizer), Kelsey Larson (At Large class of 2022), and Karl LaClair (At Large class of 2023). The Council was meeting monthly both remotely on Zoom and in person with worship occurring weekly in person at the cathedral. The Council was delighted to be able to meet regularly in person and build a closer connection and relationship with one another.

Much of the Council's work this year was focused on addressing the low level of volunteer leadership within the community. The Council spent a lot of time in meetings examining what the community is most in need of right now and how to best invite new leaders to come forward.

Illness among members of the Council was an issue that the Council had to work through this year. Our Council rallied to support one another and make space for those who needed rest, to rest.

Our Music Director, Jimmy Lim took a leave to pursue a music degree program at Berklee in New York City. An interim Music Director was quickly appointed in Jillian Carelli.

We continued our work toward being an anti-racist church, and being able to sincerely and authentically claim that title. We have been using the Racial Justice Audit of Episcopal Leadership as the starting point for our conversations. Many of the conversations have been very intense and the Council is strongly committed to this work.

While this was another tiring year for the Council, our monthly meetings were always filled with laughter and joy as our Council continued to look at why it is we all love the Crossing and how to best share that love and joy among the community.

Submitted by council member, Karl LaClair

## **Chapter Representative Report**

The Chapter spent some of the time meeting in person this year, and some of the time meeting on Zoom. Throughout the year, we discussed the Racial Justice Audit and in December Chapter voted to "receive the report with Great Thanksgiving" and continue discussing it.

In May, Chapter approved a \$4.8 million renovation project that is replacing the 20+ year old HVAC system. The construction is well underway, and is so far, under budget. I was told that the renovations would not be occurring during services for any of the Cathedral's ministries (including the Crossing).

Once the Chapter approved the HVAC project, Chapter began discussing a Capital Campaign to help fund the renovations. The planning committee began discussing their plan for raising funds both privately and publicly. When I spoke to Dean Amy about it, she assured me that the money would not affect the crossing.

In 2022 Chapter approved The Center for Theology and Prayer. The goal of the Center is to form disciples of Christ in every congregation. The Center will be a hub for local parishioners and other congregations to come together and grow in faith. The center will equip and resource local congregations and will both provide training for ministries and a deeper understanding of Christianity; depending on what people discern they are called for. It will give people a chance to learn, and also a chance to go out and minister; and it will be housed at the Cathedral and three (3) regional diocesan centers along with a website to support its work.

Submitted by Rebecca Spangler, Chapter Representative

## **Worship Circle**

The Worship Circle helps guide The Crossing through the seasons of the church year in our Thursday Worship, summer House Church, and other liturgical events. We meet monthly to plan worship. We started the year with Rev. Tamra Tucker, Autumn Cutting, Sawyer Tracy (Bindel), and our brand new music director Jimmy Lim. Midway through the year, Sawyer stepped away, Jimmy took a leave of absence, Jillian Carelli joined us as Interim music director, and Penny Wilhelm came on board.

We have continued to worship upstairs in the Cathedral sanctuary, and we are eternally grateful for Sean Griffin's expertise, troubleshooting, and dedication to keeping us connected!

The year began with lighthouses, as we asked how we can be beacons of light for each other. Because of a COVID19 resurgence, we took a break from doing Eucharist during the season of Epiphany. We decided to continue our nautical theme through Lent, reflecting on what anchors us in the storms of life, writing these things on rocks and dropping them in a bowl of water.

This year during Holy Week, we collaborated with MANNA on a Maundy Thursday service which began with dinner at 6 in Sproat followed by worship in the sanctuary at 7. We also collaborated with the Cathedral on an Easter Vigil service - the first in-person Vigil since 2019!

During Eastertide, we focused on tidal ebbs and flows, ups and downs. Michael Z made a beautiful ocean beach backdrop for us to write our highs and lows on during open space. This was also a time of rejoicing as we reintroduced the practices of holding hands during the Lord's Prayer, sharing the peace with hugs or handshakes in addition to waves and nods, and sharing wine during Eucharist, not just bread.

Our Ascension and Pentecost services were small yet meaningful lay-led liturgies, while Tamra and the entire band were given 2 weeks off for "Covid Respite." For the remainder of our program year, we reflected on things that inspire us, that provide the wind in our sails, and invited people to share stories about their own spiritual journeys.

In August, it is our practice to take a break from the cathedral space and worship together in our homes, parks, and coffee shops. Shout out to our hosts for last year's house church services, Michaye, Karl and M, and Michael! We prayed, sang, created art and community together.

In the fall, leaders from The Crossing helped develop a program that sets our theme for the whole year that includes our out-of-worship activities. Our theme is Home: Building Belonging through Shared Stories. We began a series of reflections on home and building belonging. Inspired by our Pentecost story-sharing, we decided to continue the practice of inviting people to share personal stories about what home means to them, and what foundational values have shaped their lives. We began with our values in stories of our foundations so that we knew what values we were building our home on.

As Advent approached, we continued sharing stories and reflecting on making room for guests in our home and our hearts. We had our first ever Godly Play story allowing us to wonder and dream and play together in the mystery of God enfleshed. We took Dec. 29th off and welcomed the New Year and Epiphany on January 5th. We look forward to our continued theme of building home throughout our program year and as always look for more and different voices to offer reflections.

Submitted by Autumn Cutting (worship circle member)

## **Music Report**

At the beginning of the year we said goodbye to our long standing music director and friend, Kevin Vetiach, as they left to continue their process towards ordination. We welcomed our new music director, Jimmy Lim!

Over the summer, the Crossing's band went through many changes. Brandon and Camila (bass and keys) moved away, and Jimmy Lim, the director, relocated to NYC for the year to begin his graduate studies. Jillian Carelli, The Crossing's voice and keys substitute, was brought on the team as Interim Music Director in Jimmy's absence.

Some things changed in the employment status for our homeband that is important to record. Due to an audit and inconsistency within cathedral hiring practice, the band members were changed to contract employees over the August break. While this does little to the importance our

members hold for the community, it was a challenging transition administratively. The priest, music director, and band members are all working hard to smooth out the rough transition and integrate into the new finance system.

The home band for the remainder of 2022 consists of Adam on guitar, Hunter on bass, and Penny on drums. Penny brought in a friend, Cynthia Marr to play the keys in early October. We are looking forward to an awesome next few months and Jimmy's return.

Submitted by Jillian Carelli, Interim Music Director (w/ additions by Rev. Tamra)

## **Community**

The beginning of the year, in February, brought some transitions to our community involvement as we had a closing ceremony for our Crossing House in Cambridge. With a desire to reconnect in community, we committed to following through on our long awaited regathering of a Crossing Retreat and made that happen in March! We spent time at our Crossing Community Retreat in March to reflect, mourn, and envision ourselves in community once more. We hosted a co-facilitation training for new leaders in April while engaging in our Lenten Series small group on racial justice.

In line with this program year's theme of Home, The Crossing has focused this year on rebuilding out-of-worship activities to build community connections beyond worship. Starting in September, we restarted biweekly dinners before worship, prepared by a small group of dinner volunteers meeting monthly to cook. Attendance typically ran from 3-6 people. Dinners were warm but small, and are likely to be discontinued in 2023 in absence of a new lead volunteer and greater congregational interest.

In addition, several new small groups ran over the course of the year. These new, limited duration groups included a Lenten small group, a Rule of Life small group, a Queer Christianity group, and a Crossing Cares group for leaders, and they let members dive into aspects of their faith in an intimate, deliberate setting. Two long-term small groups, the queer science fiction/fantasy group and the fiber arts small group, continued to run.

Finally, we've experimented with new Second Saturdays fellowship activities. These Saturday get-togethers have offered a range of adventures, from movie nights to apple picking to hikes. We hope this will be a continued venue for the community to meet and socialize.

Submitted by Kelsey Larson

## **Social Work Intern Report, Krstina Wilson**

Since starting in September 2022, I have been working to meet all of the members of The Crossing who might be interested in meeting with me. In addition to these one to one meetings, I have been observing who and what The Crossing is. I have attended and participated in worship services, Cathedral staff meetings, worship circle meetings, and council meetings.



I have helped with organization within The Crossing through the creation of a spreadsheet with the year's events and what might need to be done for the event to be a success. I helped plan and execute a Queer Storytelling event which was held in December. I hosted a three session small group in which I was able to explore more in depth with other members of The Crossing what is important to the community, where folx feel we presently are, and what the community presently needs. Moving into 2023, I am looking forward to other ways in which I can help with the sustainability and health of The Crossing.

Submitted by Kristina Wilson

### **2022 Finance Update and Narrative Budget**

This past year has been filled with many transitions for The Crossing, particularly on the financial front. The Cathedral switched pledge accounting systems from Network for Good to DonorPerfect, which required folks to re-register on the new platform. In addition, an external audit of The Cathedral's finances was completed in the late Spring of 2022 with changes to policies and procedures. The Cathedral also welcomed this September a new Chief Financial Officer - Deb Thomas, who led us through a novel system for creating our 2023 annual budget and tracking 2022 expenses.

As with 2021, giving to The Crossing in 2022 was higher than in the years before the pandemic. Grant income has been difficult to obtain for our community, but funding from Bishop Gates was not obtained in 2021 and therefore that gift was transferred to the 2022 budget and was finally received. The grant income estimate has again been reduced for the 2023 annual budget, but opportunities for new resources may yet be identified. The Mission Tithe from The Crossing this year was given to Trans Resistance Massachusetts, who organize the yearly Trans Resistance March during Pride Month and “advocat[e] for the safety, joy, and liberation of TQBIPOC.”

Details on compensation for clergy and musical director have been updated by The Cathedral and are reflected in the new budget. The Cathedral's financial audit has changed the way The Crossing's music team is compensated, though the cost-of-living increase in compensation remains and is reflected in this year's budget. The cost of goods and services have swollen this past year - for example, parking, benefits, and food. Our expenses for 2023 are projected to be higher than our income; however, as with previous years, The Crossing's share of rental and endowment income from The Cathedral will help to defray the overage.

Submitted by M LeClerc, Treasurer

To see the 2023 budget, [click here](#).

To fill out your pledge card for 2023, [click here](#)!