



**Capital News**  
**Capital Campaign Committee**  
**August 7, 2023**

**Caring for God's House - Together**



## Getting to know church membership

Celebrating the first year of the capital campaign, we interviewed folks who could tell the story of RRPC. The youth group produced the sessions with Bill Cox, Marjorie Davison, Phyllis Rasmussen and Dave Shambach. We'll summarize here over the next few weeks. You can see the movie with the link in the Witness.

### **First is Bill.**

Bill is a native NM but enjoyed 45 years in CA. Upon returning to NM he chose to live in Rio Rancho Rivers Edge and wanted to find a church like the one in CA he had enjoyed for 30 yrs. We interviewed him as part of the Capital Campaign effort to get to know the church better.

**Attracted to RRPC:** "I'll try this church.... friendliest! Most welcoming! One of the friendliest I'd ever been to! After attending 2 or 3 times, folks got me involved in all kinds of things! Mission things. Taking care of the facility. This is where I want to be. I never regretted it! It's the place for people to come and be welcome.

**Rewarding:** When I have been involved with other people doing things! Early on I became an elder in charge of B&G and there were lots of things we wanted to get accomplished-- 1<sup>st</sup> painting the church inside and out. We had contractors paint the outside and sanctuary and fellowship hall. Every other room and space was painted by the members of this congregation. It was fun working together, accomplishing something. That's the kind of thing I like to do!

**Favorite story:** involves Phyllis and the luminaria. Phyllis – quite a lady!

One thing I was in charge of at Christmas time was getting the luminaria up.... Phyliss was really involved. She got the luminaria ready and so forth. And about half a dozen of us were going up the roof to put them there. By the time she was 85, I suggested that she not go up on the roof. She protested, saying she goes up on her own roof! I invited her to take charge of the job of preparing the sidewalk luminaria. She decided to accept that challenge. That lady has been involved in this church for decades! We celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday this summer! That's the story I like to tell!

**Character** of the church: Inclusive. Welcoming. Christ oriented – a lot of that due to our pastors. Particularly P. Kathy. She helps us to see Christ's story in a new and fresh way. That I really like. I think that draws people to us because that shows we are Christ oriented. We are a very musical church. Thanks to Nancy and all the people involved in the choir, bell choir, Old Time Religion. We are joyful in our music and I really like that.

**Success stories:** Our Mission. I was impressed with the mission of this church when I first joined. And this church is involved in international and local mission. It is just amazing when they ask for us to provide food for needy people– *this church provides it*. When they ask for warm clothing for children this church provides it. When the church in Cuba (either the island or the town north of here) need help, this church provides it. The choir visited Cuba this summer to share music with them.

As a gay man I was very welcomed in the CA church. I wasn't sure... RRPC is a very friendly church and seem to be welcoming of everybody. The men's group some times asks for new members to share their story. Who they are. One man said he was a former marine. That was nice to know. There are 4 of us who served.

I went to Dave, who was pastor then. And I asked -- part of my story is that I am gay. Are we ready for that? Dave said you'll find this a very welcoming congregation – so go for it. I told my story which included the fact that I was gay. Afterward the reaction I got was "Thanks for sharing your story; we are glad to have you here." I told Dave--it was a non-happening. "We just didn't realize he was gay." This is a welcoming congregation regardless of who you are, your sexual orientation, color of your skin, your past background. Everyone is welcome. This is a welcoming congregation!

**Future of RRPC:** we've had a lot of youth come through this church and be involved. An example of that is the number of scholarships given to graduating youth – I have seen youth grow from 2-3-4 years old, be involved in this church and go on to graduate --even advanced degrees. As a result of their participation here and the church continuing to support them, because of the church supporting them since they were children. That's amazing! As far as the future we don't have that many children now. But they are involved in everything. *The youth are involved*. We have fewer of them.

We are still attracting people. Recently we had 5 new adult members. That's just one Sunday. We have welcomed others this year. I think that tells about where we are heading in the future with fewer young families with children. There's a huge community out there. Adults need what we have to offer. I see that as a very fruitful future for this congregation and church.

**Pastor Kathy's observations:**

Bill has helped break down barriers and is an example of the “welcoming church” he describes. He can fix anything – note his work on Building and Grounds. He is also the co-leader of Saturday Morning’s breakfast. People listen to him – a “ministry assistant”. He was a leader in the Columbarium project.

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