

Building Hope

Blessed to be a Blessing

A Capital Campaign for
Divine Redeemer
Presbyterian Church



Rebuilding for Our
Second Century of Service to our
Neighbors & Neighborhood

"I will bless you, so that you may be a blessing"
Gen 12:4



Blessed to be a Blessing



This year, Divine Redeemer Presbyterian Church celebrates 103 years of being blessed, and allowing us to let these blessings flow to others. Our history is a story of transformation. We matured from a congregation that was an object of mission into a

community whose core mission is to transform our neighborhood together with our partner the House of Neighborly Service (HNS). The three stories below highlight this transformation.

From Homeless to Housing Neighbors



We began as a congregation of refugees fleeing the violence of the Mexican Revolution in 1915. Homeless and operating out of an abandoned saloon for years, we were later blessed by the generosity of our national denomination. In 1929, in the heart of the city's Westside barrio, we received a new "home" for the congregation and the HNS at 407 N. Calaveras where we continue to minister today. Harvey P. Smith, who

supervised the first renovation of San Antonio's historic World Heritage missions, designed our multi-use facility. From the beginning, our facilities were in constant use, providing community outreach services to area families during the week and worship for the congregation on the weekend. In 1949, the congregation built a beautiful mission-style sanctuary through the generous blessing of others who invested in us. In the late 1960s, together with HNS, we passed our blessing along by creating 84 units of low-income housing for impoverished Westside residents with a federal HUD loan. **Today**, we continue exploring ways to provide safe affordable housing for our neighbors, especially our aging senior community which seeks to age in place.



From Illiteracy to Educating Neighbors

Our immigrant membership benefitted immensely from the Presbyterian Church's dedication to education as the best vehicle to overcome poverty. Literacy schools in the evenings were held in an abandoned bar in our earliest years. Church members were provided college preparatory education by the Pres-Mex, Tex-Mex and Menaul preparatory schools with many acquiring college degrees at Trinity



University and Austin College, both Presbyterian Schools. **Today**, this blessing of a commitment to education, we now pass on through the congregation's highly successful after school program. *¡Vamos Ya!* guides the at-risk children of our neighborhood to realize their full potential and grow into productive citizens



through holistic support and caring relationships. Over its 13-year history, *¡Vamos Ya!* has a 100% high school graduation rate in a community where 47.5% of adults have not completed high school. We instill a love for education and create a community of peers and adults who make that education successful. Our final blessing for many graduates is a scholarship from the Martinez-Rivera Scholarship Fund as they begin their college journey.

From Missionary Leaders to Generating New Leadership

Long-term leadership is another blessing Divine Redeemer has received. Of the 100 years we have been in ministry, 70 of those years were staffed by just three ministers! The value of long-lasting leadership has been enduring, enabling the initiation and growth of new ministries under consistent shepherding. **Today** we pass along this blessing through the dedicated leadership development efforts of both *¡Vamos Ya!* and our *Scout Troop 52*, one of the oldest troops in the city. *Troop 52* enjoyed the remarkable



leadership of Xavier Vazquez (a legend in the SA Scouting community) for over 40 years as he trained many young men in the ways and values of scouting. Today the troop continues under the leadership of his son, Bob Vazquez, and is one of the only scout troops in San Antonio shaping leaders out of at-risk young men from the inner city. ¡Vamos Ya! has also launched its own leadership development program through its summer PeaceCamp. In six years, PeaceCamp has grown into a leadership



development engine. The Hispanic high school and college students who were molded through ¡Vamos Ya! programming are now employed as summer counselors for PeaceCamp and for our presbytery's summer camp. These youth, blessed by the program, return to pass along the blessing to the next generation of students! One of these youth, Luis Vargas, one of the youth who grew up through our programs, graduated to become the architect who designed our capital campaign rehabilitation project!

Building Hope for the Next 100 Years

We know that the church is really the people, but our building has made it possible for our people to serve our neighbors for generations. Now, after nearly 100 years of hard daily use, coupled with a commitment to channel every possible dollar into serving our community, Divine Redeemer's facility is in dire need of resurrection! Our \$2.5 million capital campaign will situate our campus for another 100 years of ministry in this community. **Your investment in our Building Hope Campaign will make possible these new plans:**

- complete rehabilitation of the historic sanctuary and original 1929 building including all major systems: plumbing, electrical and HVAC;*
- creation of a new community event center for expanded programming and community celebrations like exercise (yoga, Zumba and more) and health screenings for our community*
- rehabilitation and expansion of our tiny kitchen which serves over 20,000 meals a year to children and senior citizens!*
- renovation of the House of Neighborly Service offices and Child Development Center Kids Place adding a multi-purpose classroom for adults and children*
- ADA accessibility for all public spaces*

Your contribution positions Divine Redeemer and the House of Neighborly Service for the next century of service to our neighbors.

Thank you for your contribution!

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