

Guests at the Landing

Two parish offices at St. Michael's were outfitted as dorm rooms for the short-term stays of youth groups coming through town; the native community, especially Navajo, who come to Albuquerque when a loved one is in the hospital or they have a professional reason and need a place to sleep; or for immigrants, such as asylum seekers. Each room had two sets of bunk beds and a twin bed. The church remodeled a bathroom to have an ADA shower, and a conference / break room became a shared kitchen and living space if there was a guest. We called this area of the campus The Landing.

In 2019, crossing the border and asking for asylum in the US, according to the terms of the 1948 UN agreement, was criminalized and people automatically jailed. Non-cisgender migrants were sometimes put in separate prison pods. In New Mexico, pro bono legal teams, LGBT+ groups, faith-based organizations and other non-profits collaborated on the release, temporary housing, feeding, clothing and travel of people who bonded out of prison with sponsors all over the country. Some women were housed in The Landing in the six-months before Covid. Once out of prison, they shopped for new clothes and shoes, did their hair and nails, tidied up the shared areas and waited for their flights, giddy with delight to start new lives, 'out' as transwomen. Without any reality of what being trans in the US is like, they believed it would be better than in their countries of origin. We certainly hope so for them.