

A Year with Glencoe Union Church: 2023



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A Season of Growth, Generosity and Renewal

2023 Board of Directors

Chair: Vineet Wilson

Vice-Chair: Steve Larson

Secretary: Frank Hudson

Treasurer: Bob Taylor

Finance: Brian Miller

Outreach: Frances Baxley

Worship & Music: Mary Baker

Congregational Care: Jackie Quern

Fellowship: Cheryl Kinsman

Personnel: Jennifer Molinar

Building & Grounds: Paul Weaver

Non-Board Committees

Stewardship: Michaela Kohlstedt

A Letter from the Chair of the GUC Board of Directors, Vineet Wilson



Greetings GUC Community,

As my tenure of Board Chair comes to its conclusion, it is with great satisfaction and a grateful heart I write this note to you. Erin is firmly established as our Senior Pastor, we have a dynamic and caring Associate Pastor in Ken, our Music ministry has expanded with a fulsome choir under AJ's leadership, we have a strong administrative support staff, and a recently ratified set of updated bylaws; all this to ensure that GUC is continuing its long tradition of serving and inspiring our thriving community, as it has in over 150 years.

Over last year the biggest charge for the Board has been to ensure Erin, as our senior pastor, had appropriate resources and support for her to be able to execute her vision for GUC. To this end, we first and foremost onboarded Ken Crews as our Associate Pastor. Erin and Ken had worked together previously at First Presbyterian Church in Wilmette and as such, Ken was nominated as a potential candidate directly by Erin. Since his onboarding, we have seen for ourselves that Ken has been a tremendous addition to our leadership team as he and his family have seamlessly merged in to our community.

Over the last few months, as Erin, Ken and AJ have worked together to lead us, we have witnessed a new sense of vitality at our church. We have seen a surge in new membership with community participation continuing to increase! A great example of member participation this year has been the bylaws refresh exercise led by Carol Dawley with Alison Franklin, Hal Lochner and Susie Pratt from our congregation supporting the effort (the team also included Steve Larson, Erin Raska and myself from the Board). The last time GUC updated its bylaws was in 2001 and Erin and the Board believed that given the overall macro changes in our society (e.g., technological advancements, churchgoing demographics), it was important to look again at questions of membership and governance. Together we took on this charge as the church and, building on comments from all of you, successfully ratified the Bylaws in December 2023.

Of course, the year has not been without its challenges. Most significantly, some of our members have faced health issues, and we have also experienced the loss of several valued long-time members. It is in these moments when we have relied on each other to strengthen and hold one another up - whether through the distribution of meals or blankets from the knitting ministry, thoughtful prayer, or simply our presence with one another as we gather together on Sunday mornings.



Another disturbance of note was in November when our church was broken into. As we had informed all of you, the police were able to resolve the matter and were able to recover the most important items stolen - AJ's two guitars and a viola. But what impressed me most was that as we were in the midst of this stressful investigation, Erin, Ken and AJ led us in a wonderful worship service where the Mahmoodi

family, who we have been supporting and growing in relationship with since their arrival from Afghanistan, had the opportunity to share their story and offer us a wonderful gift of gratitude: a traditional rug from their home country! We were all surprised and deeply touched by this acknowledgment. As David Wood would say, it was a moment of resonance for all those who attended the service.

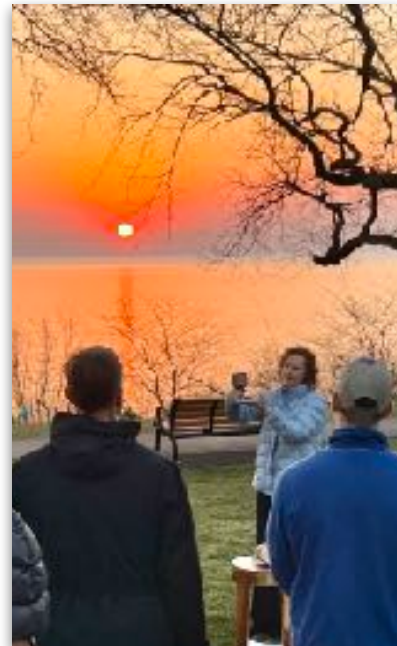
As I end my message and my tenure, I am very excited about our future. We have an active and growing community led by leaders who have displayed meaningful purpose and strong conviction. Our leadership team will now be joined by Steve Larson as the Chair of the Board, and I couldn't be more satisfied and relieved as I know that they will work well together! I am looking forward to what we have in store over the next couple of years as we continue to build upon the strong foundation and set course for a renewed future!

Vineet Wilson,
Chair, board of Directors

Season of Spring at GUC



Rev. Erin Raska's Installation



Easter Sunrise Service



Easter Sunday in the Great Hall



Easter Sunday in the Sanctuary



Women's Breakfast



Progressive Dinner

Senior Minister's Report

As I reflect on 2023 words that come to mind are energy, fresh, new, generosity, growth and gratitude. The year began with a heart-felt and meaningful celebration of, and good-bye to, David and Jennifer Wood after fourteen years of faithful and inspirational ministry. Their tenure at GUC laid an incredible foundation upon which we have had the privilege to continue to build. Although they are happily retired in Maine, their presence is still felt in the traditions they created and the relationships they fostered, for which I am grateful. Their lasting presence, however, did not stilt our growth or preclude our ability to enter into and flourish in a new season of ministry together. I am incredibly grateful for a smooth transition into my tenure as senior pastor and cannot thank the tremendous lay leadership, including the Transition Team, the GUC Board of Directors and the Bylaws Refresh Team and all of you, enough.

2023 brought about new initiatives giving fresh energy and life to GUC. Here are a few highlights:

- Jackie Quern, chair of Congregational Care, reported that over 40 individuals are in some way engaged in this ministry which includes the prayer team, the visitation team and the meal team. And, new this year, the Knitting Ministry, led by Laurie Jaffe and Lorel McMillian, knit fifteen blankets that were then delivered to those in our community who are not able to regularly be with us.
- Thanks to your generosity, the church made several much-needed capital upgrades to our building that will ensure it continues to be a spiritual home for future generations.
- In September, we confirmed ten confirmation students and welcomed four new families into GUC membership.
- On December 10, we adopted an updated set of bylaws (they had not been updated in over 20 years!) that gives us the right balance of structure and nimbleness to do effective ministry.
- Kevin Kohlstedt started a monthly Men's Breakfast which I'm told has been fabulous, particularly Kevin's generous homemade breakfasts.
- Perhaps the "newest" addition to GUC was adding Ken Crews to our staff, in September. Having Ken as a part of the team has been a tremendous gift to GUC and to me. I very much value Ken as a colleague and appreciate the way he, and his family, quickly and seamlessly became a part of our community.
- We also reprised some old-time favorites, including the progressive dinner (which brought out 80 folks!) and the Christmas Manse Open House was back hosted by the Crews Family.



I am grateful for the long-standing traditions such as Gather Sunday, the Christmas Dinner, our shared Maundy Thursday service with St. Paul AME and the many others that gather us and anchor the rhythm of our congregation's life.

Worship continues to be our center, gathering us weekly and reminding us of who we are and to whom we belong.

The year was broken into four preaching series:

Lenten Series: "A Springtime Moment"

Summer Series: "OT's Greatest Hits"

Fall Series: "Life in the Spirit"

Advent Series: "Hope, Peace, Joy and Love"

I am grateful to work alongside the tremendous staff at GUC. Virginia's warm presence in the front office, not to mention her remarkable project management skills, is an immense gift.

AJ and Hyea Young continue to provide outstanding worship leadership, never ceasing to move us with their music. Luba, along with Brian Miller and Bob Taylor, expertly manages the day-to-day finances of GUC. We bid farewell to Pete Lemme after one and half years as our Facility Manager. It was hard to say good-bye to such a kind and good man, but we are happy for his move towards retirement and warmer weather. And, as I mentioned above, having Ken on board has been a wonderful addition to our church and staff.

I hope as you read through the following pages you give thanks for all God has done in our midst and look with hope towards a new year!

With Gratitude!
Erin R. Raska

"Glencoe Union Church has a bright and welcoming community that includes ethically motivated people, a splendid music program, and a vibrant youth program. The preaching is a gift to us each week, with committed preachers who have personally integrated beliefs expressed with clear and good-natured personal styles. Both of us are grateful to be part of this church where our faith is stimulated and expanded so gracefully."

-Cherie & Christopher Miller

Associate Minister's Report

2023 was a year of change for the Crews family. Opening the year in IN and closing it in IL bookends a wonderful new adventure. Since arriving in Glencoe, GUC staff and community have welcomed us with a spirit of generosity and kindness.

From Gather Sunday to Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship, the fall and early winter have provided numerous opportunities to reinforce the many compelling reasons I felt called to serve alongside GUC. Gather Sunday revealed a congregation who understands the importance of community and fellowship. Vibrant weekly worship offers thoughtful, creative opportunities to praise God and grow in relationship with Jesus Christ. Events like Family Promise, monthly La Casa Norte lunch-making, Thanksgiving dinners, and Holiday Hygiene Bags highlight a faith community that takes seriously Christ's command to love and care for others. And so many of these opportunities bring together God's people of all ages!

As Associate Minister, a primary responsibility, one which I find great joy in, is Children, Youth, and Family Ministry.

I commend our lead teachers, Anne and Cristina, for their great work with our children this year and look forward to supporting and guiding their work into a new season at GUC.

I believe ministry is relational, and I have taken time this fall to begin building relationships with our staff and members of all ages. Coffee meetups and weekly ministry emails are a start to connecting more effectively with families. The return of monthly Children's Moments in worship and the GUC Christmas Pageant gave space to spend time with our youngest members. Sunday evening groups, weekday sporting events, and the occasional theater performance have proven effective in connecting with our junior and senior high youth.

As I reflect on 2023, I am grateful that God invited me to come alongside GUC. I am grateful for the warm welcome my family has received. It has been such a natural transition that I feel, in the best way possible, that we've been together all year. And I

look with great anticipation toward all that 2024 has in store for GUC!

Peace,



Music Ministry - A report from A. J. Keller

It has been an eventful year for the GUC Music Ministry. We began 2023 by joining forces with the congregations of St. Paul AME and North Shore United Methodist in our second annual combined service commemorating the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Our choristers joined forces to sing Richard Smallwood's Total Praise and Edwin Hawkins's O Happy Day, led by their music director Derrick Vinson. It was a truly inspiring collaboration.

In addition to all of our usual musical offerings, last spring, the Chancel Choir presented a series of choral-orchestral works by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, accompanied by a small string orchestra. In the summer, our music was mostly led by a variety of guest musicians, as A.J. was away on an extensive professional choir tour and Hyea Young was traveling to Korea with her family. During the summer, we lost a dear friend — longtime GUC congregant and Chancel Choir member Liz Coggin. We were grateful for the opportunity to celebrate her life with fellowship, meaningful reflection, and elaborate music provided by her friends in the Chancel Choir and a guest string quartet. It was a gift to be able to honor her memory and reflect on the love, joy, and selflessness that she brought to church week after week.

This fall, we said farewell to two of our section leaders, both of whom attained appointments directing church choirs of their own. Jack Reeder moved on to serve as the choral director at

First Presbyterian Church in Lake Forest, and Andrew Major was appointed the music director at Northminster Presbyterian Church in Evanston. We are sad to see them go, but we're very excited about their new opportunities and grateful for their service at GUC — Andrew in particular, who sang with us from 2019-2023, helped lead us musically

throughout the pandemic lockdowns, and who was always ready to step in and conduct the choir or play piano when needed. We've welcomed several new section leaders this year — Adam Kosberg, V Matthew Steinbaum, Risha Hussain, Manda Gervase, and Matthew Recio — and we're so glad to have them in our community.

Advent was absolutely packed with carols! After a fall hiatus, the Handbell Choir reconvened to present a variety of Christmas carol arrangements; our section leaders led us in carols during

the annual Christmas Tree Lighting; and several of our congregants performed carols at our annual Christmas Dinner. The culmination occurred on the fourth Sunday of Advent, when the Chancel Choir presented Benjamin Britten's beautiful *Ceremony of Carols*, featuring our recurring collaborator Autumn Selover on harp. We also collaborated with the youth and our new Associate Minister Ken Crews to put together a lovely Christmas pageant video — the first of what we hope will be many collaborations between the youth and music ministries in the coming years.

A.J. Keller-Director of Music.



Outreach Report

Outreach this year was very active both operationally and in service with our many partners. As stewards of the outreach budget we continued with our 3 Tier approach to giving and began to organize the committee around the principles of trust-based philanthropy. This means, we became more proactive in cultivating a deeper relationship with each of our partners. We feel outreach is more successful and rewarding for GUC members and our partners if we approach the relationship as collaborative and relational rather than transactional.

Our mission is to continue working with and finding community-based grass roots organizations that will benefit from both a relational partnership and financial support. These organizations help neighbors facing food insecurity, homelessness, community violence, substance abuse, migration experiences and economic uncertainty.

By the Numbers

- \$93,000 of the total Outreach budget of \$103,000 was distributed to 17 partner organizations.
- 6 Tier 1 partners = \$48,000
- 4 Tier 2 partners = \$24,000
- 7 Tier 3 partners = \$21,000
- The remaining \$10,000 was allocated to organizations (partner and non-partner) on a discretionary basis.
- GUC raised an additional \$20,209 that supported Refugee One, the Migrant Fund and Holiday gifts (Thanksgiving Baskets and Holiday Bags).

Activities- Highlights of the Year

La Casa Norte - Bag Lunches;
We started a lunch program for La Casa Norte. On the 3rd Sunday of every month we gather in the kitchen after worship to make and bag lunches (around 100) for distribution by La Casa Norte.

Week of Service

Working alongside our friends at C24/7, La Casa Norte, and Facing Forward over 40 volunteers from GUC, painted, bagged lunches, cleaned out closets and created new home baskets.

Family Promise

Twice in 2023, we hosted families struggling with homelessness, providing meals, hospitality, and overnight accommodations.

Thanksgiving Baskets

We delivered 200 baskets this year: 190 to A Just Harvest and 10 to Family Service of Glencoe.

Holiday Bags

New to GUC this year, we delivered 96 "Holiday Bags" filled with toiletries, towel, gloves, scarf, hat, and hand warmers to La Casa Norte for distribution.

2024 promises to be brimming with Outreach activity. We look forward to working with you and our partners as we do what we can to make God's love and hope made known in the world.

Catherine Schulte,
Outreach Chair



"GUC to me, is a community where I feel welcomed and loved. Every service is an opportunity to express my love for God and share that love with everyone else in the congregation. GUC means friendship, with people much older than me, people my age, and those younger. Most importantly, GUC is a place where I feel safe and a place to go when things are tough."

-Dylan Jeppe





Pentecost Sunday



Season of Summer at GUIC



Playing in the Garden



Bike & Brunch



Outdoor Summer Service



Bike & Brunch



Confirmation Trip



Confirmation Trip



Confirmation Trip

Adult Education

Adult Education continued to play an important role in the life of GUC.

In January, David Wood hosted several of his closest friends and colleagues for conversations around the future of the church. Susie Pratt and I taught a class on "Awe" in the Spring. In the Fall, I led a four-part series on "The Uncontrollability of the World" by Hartmut Rosa. The Women's Retreat "The Art of Being Present" was a delightful day of creativity, expression and movement that invited presence to God, each other and ourselves.



Discussion with Dr. David Victorson on "Recovering Awe"



Hand-made pottery from the Women's Retreat

"We've moved around the country and experienced many church communities. But GUC is unique. It's an actively engaged congregation of people who are supportive, not simply fellow parishioners. The congregation is a Goldilocks size — small enough to really be connected to people, but big enough to offer a wide range of programs. I feel like I've grown as a person. I have a deeper understanding of the Christian faith. I have a wider aperture of the world through the speakers, group discussions, book readings, and outreach projects. I'm always learning from the many friendly and accomplished people at GUC. The music fills the soul. Being a member of GUC has been stimulating, fulfilling, and moving."

Thanks for this opportunity!

-Tim Franklin

Congregational Care



Lorel McMillan with her dad, Dick Janzow

"Our Knitting Ministry embodies for me the synergy, creativity and community that I love about Glencoe Union. We began in the spring with a handful of rookie and experienced knitters who met to share ideas. In the fall, we chose fiber and settled on two patterns, one for an elegant lap blanket and the other for squares to combine into a comfortable patchwork. We gathered in the Great Hall at GUC Mondays in the late afternoon, and that's when the magic began! Knitters may have had wool in their hands but they were knitting connections of a deeper kind, sharing stories, helping each other, watching their patterns grow and change. Fifteen blankets were completed, dedicated and given to welcoming laps before Christmas. We hope you join us in the spring!"

-Lorel McMillan



The Congregational Care Committee is responsible for the care and nurture of all members of the Congregation. That care manifests in four distinct ministries:

Visitation:

At this time, we have eleven members either under care or unable to be with us in person on a regular basis due to health concerns. These individuals are contacted several times a year by phone, written notes, and personal visits. There are six members on the visitation team.

Prayer Team:

Monthly prayer lists are generated, following communion Sunday when prayer request cards are made available, and updated as needed throughout the month. Twenty-two individuals comprise the Prayer Team, aged 18-93.

Meals At Home:

Occasionally, due to illness, birth, or bereavement, meals are put together and delivered to members' homes. This ministry involves six to eight members.

Knitting:

Our newest ministry, this effort involves fifteen to twenty members at all levels of knitting ability and experience. So far, they have generated over a dozen prayer shawl/lap blankets, which were given over the holidays to our visitation team for distribution. A blanket for a new baby expected in January, and scarves for our graduating high school seniors are planned. When those projects have been completed, the hope is to work with some of our outreach partners to provide knitted items for the use of their clients/guests.

Respectfully Submitted, Jackie Quern, Chair

"The new knitting ministry is a joy and a true blessing. Last fall, 20 enthusiastic knitters — both experienced and beginner — met twice a month to complete lap blankets to express love and care for isolated members of our GUC community. In December, 15 blankets were dedicated in church and then given to recipients. The Hebrew word "mitzvah" beautifully describes what God created in this ministry. A mitzvah is a deed done in heartfelt response to "love thy neighbor." It, of course, blesses the receiver, but the greater blessing returns to the one serving — in our case, the knitters of GUC. Our hearts are full."

-Laurie Jaffe

"2023 was a difficult year for both Chris and me. When I was hospitalized for a week, a meal train was organized to keep Chris well fed with enough leftovers to freeze for my return. People always ask about him in his absence from services. We moved and again our GUC community offered support. I deeply appreciate my cross-generational friendships."

-Emily Knight

Youth Ministry Grades 5-12

Youth Ministry (Grades 5-12)

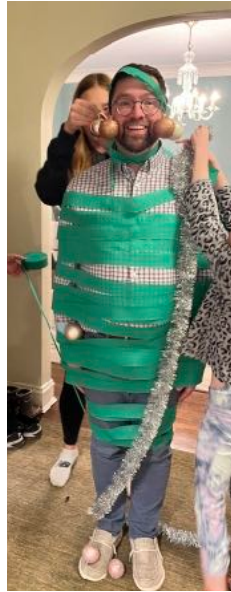
2023 provided many opportunities for youth to explore their faith, worship together, build relationships, serve the world and, of course, have fun!

Youth gathered throughout the year in two different groups: PREPARE Youth, grades 5-7, met the 1st and 3rd Sundays and PITCH Youth, grades 8-12, met the 2nd and 4th Sundays. 5th Sundays created time for children, youth, and parents to enjoy fellowship and fun at events like *GUC Minute to Win It: Family Edition!*

As Pastor Erin transitioned into her new Senior Minister position, she continued to guide youth through the spring and summer. I was welcomed into the community at the beginning of September, thrilled to build on the solid ministry foundation that GUC has created over the years.

Each Sunday, youth began by checking in and sharing 'highs' and 'lows', providing space to share about the good and challenging things that might be happening in their lives. Icebreakers and team-building activities have helped us all grow in relationship, while casual, yet intentional, conversation creates space to weave God's story with ours.

Service is a meaningful component of the Christian life, and our youth took time to serve God's people this Fall. In October, PREPARE Youth packed 100 lunches for clients of La Casa Norte, while PITCH Youth welcomed our Family Promise guests with a delicious



meal on Sunday, November 12th. Children and youth of all ages pitched in to pack and deliver 200 Thanksgiving dinners - 190 went to A Just Harvest and 10 were sent to Family Services of Glencoe.

We closed out 2023 with festive Christmas parties for both groups. Ridiculous games, food, and a fun gift exchange highlighted both events. Not to be overshadowed by the raucous merriment of Christmas-themed games, several children, youth, and adults came together to practice and record our annual Christmas Pageant. Special thanks to A.J., Anne, and Cristina for guiding our pageant cast!

As we move into 2024, I encourage you to connect with our incredible youth. It's easy to do! You'll very often find them participating in the many ministry events GUC has to offer. Thank you to our youth, parents, and community for a wonderful 2023!

Peace, Pastor Ken



"I have been going to GUC for as long as I can remember. I enjoy seeing familiar faces and working as a community to grow in our faith with God. I especially enjoy Youth Group because it helps me to learn about God in creative ways that are refreshing and make it fun and memorable for everyone. Glencoe Union Church has helped me find my Christian faith and I look forward to continuing my journey with God and GUC." -Isla Kelly

Confirmation Class of 2023



2023 Confirmands: Serena Bauer, Charles Halliday, Michael Hayek, Mia Kelly, Delaney Maher, Abby Mason, Cole Mason, Ari Staffilino, Addison Weber, and Max Vogel.

One of the highlights of 2023, for me, was the Confirmation Wilderness Trek to Northern Idaho and Western Washington. For six days, 9 students - along with chaperone Nathan Jaffe, myself and my dad - canoed, swam, biked, ATV-ed, camped, hiked and ziplined our way through the beauty of the Inland Northwest. Although these activities were exhilarating and fun, more importantly, they facilitated authentic conversation and deep reflection around how our faith shapes our daily lives. With Scripture as our map, pillars of faith as our guides and prayer and reflection as our nourishment we grew in our faith individually and collectively.

Confirmation is not a class where at the end comes a graduation. Rather confirmation is a part of a larger journey of faith; a journey that continues after confirmation is over. It was a delight and joy to confirm 10 students (one student was not able to attend the trek because of an injury) on September 17, and welcome them as members of Glencoe Union Church. As I said then, they are not simply JV members and I am eager for how their voices, gifts and presence will shape our congregation in the coming years and how they will inspire all of us in our faith journey.



Children's Ministries

Infant-4th Grade

Children's ministry has had an exciting year. We started the year off by talking about building relationships and being kind to others. While we have older children upstairs, and our younger children downstairs we are talking about the same stories each week. We are thinking about, creating, and discussing the stories at age-appropriate levels. Our younger children thrive from the process of art and play, while our older children are able to dive more deeply into connections they have around them.

This year we talked about many different stories in the bible - along with our Christmas pageant. We talked about Creation, Adam and Eve, Noah's Ark, Exodus, etc. We always connect what we are learning in church to the larger world around us. For example, when talking about creation - we asked our students how humans connect to creation, or what would happen if one part of creation didn't work right. When talking about Noah's Ark we asked children how they feel inside when they see someone behaving badly. Or how did Noah feel watching his neighbors? Being able to have everyone take part in our Christmas pageant this year was so wonderful to see. Each week, all the students combined to practice for the pageant, and it was amazing to see how everyone melded so well together and helped each other out.

Anne Marion,
Director of Children's Ministries



"When my family and I started visiting GUC, we were immediately welcomed into the warm community and found ourselves (even the kids!) looking forward to attending services and Sunday school each week. Erin and Ken provide such relevant and inspiring messages; and AJ, Hyea Young, and the choir make my heart so happy with their music. I am so grateful for all the opportunities to volunteer with my kids, from making meals to purchasing items for a new home. GUC is helping all of us have a greater understanding and compassion for those less fortunate. I look forward to continuing our family's growth in faith and service with such a wonderful church."

-Amy Lundy



Season of Fall at GUC



Gather Sunday



Bike & Brunch



Harvest Fest



Confirmation Sunday



Fellowship Events



Women's Breakfast

The vibrant church life that GUC provides is enhanced by the Fellowship activities that we experience together. This year, more than ever, all the events and gatherings were planned, organized, set up and implemented by many members of the GUC community. In that way, the Fellowship Committee has expanded and remains fluid! The generosity, enthusiasm and joy that all the volunteers bring to making these events fun and meaningful speaks to the love we have for the church and each other. As always, GUC Fellowship events give us an opportunity to be part of the church family where we work, grow, serve and worship together.



Gather Sunday



Coffee Hour in the Great Hall



Harvest Fest Dinner



Christmas Dinner volunteers

Fellowship activities we enjoyed in 2023 included:

Monthly Events:

Women's Breakfast
Men's Breakfast (started in summer 2022 by Kevin Kohlstedt)
GUC Book Club (organized by Paula Giovacchini)
Bike & Brunch (Summer, Fall)

Annual Favorites:

Ravinia Night (July)
Gather Sunday (September)
Harvest Fest (October)
Women's Retreat (November)
Christmas Tree Lighting (December)
Christmas Dinner (December)
Progressive Dinner (May)

New This Year

Knitting Ministry (Fellowship and Service, organized by Laurie Jaffe)
Christmas Cookie Decorating (December)

Special thanks to all who contributed their time, creativity and talent to make each of these events successful.

Cheryl Kinsman Miller, Fellowship Chair

"From the first day I attended services at GUC, its community fellowship felt immediately obvious. I didn't know a soul, but several people noticed this newcomer and beamed warm, welcoming smiles in my direction. During coffee hour, members introduced themselves and made me feel accepted. I came back the next week. And the next. I joined the sisterhood brunch-n-learn (Women's Breakfast), the Book Club, and the Knitting Ministry. The fun, the friendship, and the learning all seemed too good to be true. But two years later, every day at GUC is as good as my first. Whether you want to participate in regular monthly activities or simply help with a project for an hour, you will find a home here and make meaningful connections."

-Shelly Schacht



Christmas Dinner



Christmas Party at the Crews'

Treasurer's Report

2023 GUC ANNUAL INVESTMENT REPORT

ENDOWMENT FUND

Balance: \$2,752,689
Market gains: 14.1%
Withdrawals to fund operations: \$115,203
Asset allocation:
64% stocks
36% bonds & cash

In 2023, the Endowment Fund increased in value by \$228,117 (9%) to \$2.75 million, and reflects performance of 14.1% driven by a strong performance in the stock market. The balance reflects \$115,203 of withdrawals to fund GUC operations and Outreach, which was permitted per the endowment terms. There were no contributions to the fund this year. During the year, the fund increased. The portfolio currently holds 64% stocks, which is within the prescribed 60-70% equity range that's been approved by the Board.

MEMORIAL GARDEN FUND

Balance: \$94,889
Withdrawals to fund operations: \$14,000
Asset allocations:
76% bonds
24% cash

The Memorial Garden Fund decreased in value by \$8,650 to \$94,889. A gift of \$10,000 was received from Helen Turley and was transferred to the Memorial Garden checking account. We withdrew \$14,000 over the year for operations. The account currently holds no equities.

CONGREGATIONAL FUND

Balance: \$140,937
Market Performance
Withdrawals to fund operations: \$42,000
Music gifts received included:
Anonymous Donor \$50,000
Memorial Gift \$20,968
Bequest 9,900
Total \$80,868
Liz Coggin (Charlie Stone) \$50,000 (Operations)

Asset allocation:
100% cash
The Congregational Fund increased in value by \$62,939.

BUILDING IMPROVEMENT FUND

Balance: \$208,486
Withdrawals to fund operations: \$15,000
Asset allocation: 100% cash
There will be a \$57,284 withdrawal from the fund in 2024 to cover some of the roof repair cost and new boiler. The fund is invested in cash.

Reverend Bobbie Taylor Fund

Church projects funded were:
Confirmation Class Trip \$5,000
Building Capital Campaign \$5,000

Balance: \$96,489
All data as of Dec. 31, 2023
Respectfully Submitted,
A. Robert Taylor, Treasurer

2024 Budget Allocation between Operations and Outreach

	Total	Operations	Outreach	Increase over 2023
Investment Income				
Endowment	117,362	78,793	38,569	2,159
GUC Trust Income	154,000	154,000		15,000
CCT Fund Income	20,000		20,000	3,000
Total Investment Revenue	291,362	232,793	58,569	20,159
Giving Income				
Pledge/Non-Pledge Income	570,000	525,569	44,431	2,000
Outreach Fundraisers (1)	10,000	—	10,000	—
Total	871,362	758,362	113,000	22,159
2023 vs. 2024 Comparison				
Income % Allocation in 2023		87.05%	12.95%	
Income % Allocation in 2024		87.03%	12.97%	

(1) Outreach Fundraisers 2023

Migrant Fund	\$1,997
Refugee One	\$7,748
Holiday gifts	\$10,464
Total	\$20,209

Budget Allocation Report 2023/2024

Finance Report

GUC continues to be in excellent financial condition. There have been special needs which have been responded to by the congregation in a very positive way. Pledges and a very successful capital campaign have been most helpful.

Notes on 2023 cash flow

The positive cash flow of about \$360,000 was the result in large part to a capital campaign of \$265,756, of which only \$123,000 was spent in 2023. More will be spent in 2024 on additional projects noted elsewhere in this report. There were also several generous gifts.

Notes on 2023 Income

Annual pledges, non-pledge gifts, bequests, miscellaneous sources, capital campaign and investments produced total income of approximately \$1,348,500.

Notes on 2023 expenses

Our expenses totaled \$1,052,000. Our personnel expense was \$468,800 and was more than covered by pledge income which is always our goal. The cost of repairs was about \$123,000. There will be additional repair costs in 2024.

Notes on Proposed Budget

GUC began the year with a very successful \$535,000 pledge campaign.

The personnel costs for staff in 2024 will be \$537,453. This cost will be basically covered by pledge income. The expenditure for outreach will be \$103,000. The proposed operating budget for 2024 will have a deficit of about \$25,000. This was anticipated and will be covered by \$10,000 from the Memorial Garden to cover some personnel costs and \$15,000 from the Congregation fund for music. There were music gifts in 2023 which are meant to cover multiple years of additional music expenditures.

Capital Expenditures

There are several additional repairs and improvements to be done this year. There is \$142,000 left of last years reserve. The total amount needed is not known at this time. Funding will come from the capital campaign, the congregation fund, special gifts, and the building improvement fund. All these resources will probably not be needed. The Board of Directors recognizes the importance of the special gifts GUC has received over the last few years. The Board believes that we will need to continue to elevate our pledge base to fund personnel and programs in the future.

Submitted by Brian G Miller, Chair

	2023 Budget	2023 Actual	2024 Budget
Investment Income			
Pledge	550,000	556,510	550,000
Non-Pledge	18,500	65,742	20,000
Investment	271,627	279,454	291,362
Misc. Income	5,000	446,812	0
Total Income	845,127	1,348,519	861,362
Expenses			
Personnel	522,522	475,895	537,453
Program Expenses	72,033	104,627	101,957
Outreach Expenses	103,000	103,061	103,000
Buildings and Grounds	133,793	236,237	90,164
Office Expenses	45,800	50,670	54,100
Misc. Expenses	0	81,195	0
Total Expenses	877,148	1,051,688	886,674
Net Operating Income	(32,021)	296,830	(25,312)

Building Improvement Campaign		(265,756)	
Repairs Improvements		123,040	
Anonymous Donor and Memorial Bequests		(130,868)	
Net Budgeted Operating Income	(32,021)	(23,246)	(25,312)

Christmas Season at GUC



Christmas Dinner



Christmas Cookie Decorating



Tree Lighting



PITCH Youth Group



Christmas Party at the Crews'



Christmas Eve Service



Advent



Stewardship Report

I want to begin with a word of thanks to the members of Glencoe Union Church for allowing me to lead the annual Stewardship Campaign. The Stewardship Campaign's theme for 2024 was, "Abundant Life" inspired by John 10:10 where Christ says, "I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly." Throughout my time at GUC, I have continuously witnessed Christ's promise of abundant life, particularly as so many of you quickly responded with a pledge towards our goal of 550,000. While we are just shy of our goal, the final number of \$531,000 allows GUC to start the year with a balanced budget. This is all thanks to our generous members.

I want to also give a special note of thanks to the dozens of members who took time to write notes of what GUC means to you for inclusion with the 2024 Stewardship Campaign letter. The greatest reward of my role as the Stewardship Chair was reading the notes written by the youth members of the congregation and how the repeated theme from them was that GUC is a place that

Buildings and Grounds

Our goal is to maintain our 100+ year old buildings with an emphasis on safety and efficiency. Thanks to the generosity of members of our congregation, we had the funding to take on several major building projects in 2023. This included replacing the boilers in the church which, were installed in 1996, and major maintenance on the wheelchair lift which connects the sanctuary to the Great hall.

In addition, as we welcomed Ken and Heather Crews and family to the Glencoe Union Church, the manse was repainted and the lead water supply line to the residence was replaced per new state guidelines.

Other building needs were identified and funds raised, but not completed in 2023 due to contractor scheduling. These projects will be completed in 2024 and include replacement of the roof above the Great Hall and a new air conditioning system for the sanctuary. The committee would like to thank Pete Lemme, Building Manager for all his efforts to keep the buildings in good shape.

Paul Weaver,
Buildings & Grounds Chair

Bylaws

The Bylaws Refresh Committee was convened and began its work in June 2023 to review and update the then current bylaws last amended in 2001. Throughout the summer, the Committee worked to update the bylaws to reflect current conditions and anticipated needs for the Church to function effectively. During the Fall, there was a month long period for the Congregation to review, question and provide input to the Committee, including three "town halls." The Board approved on November 21, 2023 the final version of the new bylaws which was sent to all Members in advance of a special Congregation Meeting called on December 10, 2023 at which there was a quorum and the new bylaws were unanimously approved.

Carol Dawley, Bylaws Committee

Human Resources

This year we revived the role of Personnel Chair and used the opportunity to develop a Personnel Handbook to establish a consistent knowledge base for the GUC staff. The handbook helps promote GUC culture and values, ensure compliance with laws and regulations, and will serve as an onboarding tool to help new team members get settled in. To wrap up 2023, we held year-in-review sessions with each team member to reflect on the past year's accomplishments and look ahead at 2024 for opportunities that will enable continued growth and development for each member of our GUC team. Our talented GUC team members are vital to GUC's work and ministry, and we are so grateful to each of them for their contributions in 2023!

Jennifer Molinar, Personnel Chair



How have you experienced
"Abundant Life" here at GUC?

"I am thankful for how close we are, like a family"

"I am thankful for coffee hour"

"...incredible music program..."

"...found a second home..."

"I enjoy meeting multiple generations"

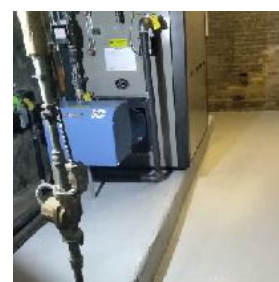
"found in so many memories"

"It helps me to know the abundance of God's
love, joy and hope"

feels like home. Take that sentence for a moment and just think about that – how blessed we are as a congregation to know that we have created, and sustain, a home for the next generation to come. The annual pledges allow us to continue to create that special atmosphere.

Finally another note of thanks goes to Pastor Erin Raska who helped me with this new endeavor, and to Virginia Payne, Mary Baker, Jackie Quern, Helen Weaver, and Cheryl Miller for assisting with the actual printing and mailing of the campaign letters that were sent to all your homes.

As you read this, remember that your pledge assists in not only continuing to keep the "home" that has been created open and operating, but it also allows GUC to maintain outstanding musical talent lead by AJ Keller and Hyea Young Cho, ever expanding adult education programs, and the thriving youth programs. I look forward to continuing to work with the congregation to ensure an abundant life continues to surround us. With thanks,
Michaela Kohlstedt, Stewardship Chair



Boiler replacement;
before and after

Transitions

Baptisms

Jan 22, 2023
Razi Atighi & Saviz Atighi

Sept 17, 2023
Michael Patrick Hayek
Abigail Mary Mason
Cole James Mason

Oct 22, 2023
Leonardo Alexander Tanko
Inez Leah Tanko

Marriages

Liz Meyer & Elliot Gardner
March 18, 2023

Lauren & Evan Pomerance
August 12, 2023

In Memoriam

Stanley Beals
1932 - 2023

Shirley Bray
1928 - 2023

Elizabeth Betty Bryan
1932 - 2023

Elizabeth Coggin
1934 - 2023

Daniela Eklund
1934 - 2023

William D. Kerr Jr.
1934 - 2023

Ann Martin
1931-2023

Robert Barrett Morris
1922 - 2023

Susan Rodenberger
1940-2022

Helen Turley
1925 - 2023

Charles Sprowl
1940 - 2022

John Wick
1935 - 2023

Alison Zehr
1953 - 2023

Confirmands

Set 17, 2023

Serena Bauer,
Charles Halliday
Michael Hayek
Mia Kelly
Delaney Maher
Abby Mason
Cole Mason
Ari Staffilino
Addison Weber
Max Vogel

GUC Welcomes New Members in 2023

The Anderson Family



Matt and Erica (Smith) Anderson, pictured lefts, have been residents of Glencoe since 2014 after their twins were born. They started visiting GUC in 2019 and found it to be welcoming to them and their family. Erica lives with her husband, Matt, and their two children, twins Isobel and Callum Anderson, who were baptized last year at the Church. Also, her mother, Clote Smith, is a GUC member and resides with Erica and her family. Erica has a busy professional life as an obstetrician gynecologist and likes to attend GUC when she can to explore her faith. She is looking forward to having more worship, community and outreach experiences with other GUC congregants and members.

The Stepf Family



Maggie, Linhard, and Jasper (7), pictured right, live in Winnetka after moving to the North Shore during the pandemic. Jasper is enjoying Hubbard Woods Elementary School and loves to play basketball with his friends and enjoys playing the piano. Maggie works for Moda Operandi as a Personal Stylist, while Linhard is a Partner at Vistra, a global accounting and corporate services firm. In their free time, they love to explore their new neighborhood, play family games, and travel, especially to Germany where Linhard grew up. They have enjoyed spending the last few months at GUC and look forward to becoming more involved with the GUC community.

The Sanford Family



New Member Sunday

"We can't say enough about the impact that GUC has had in our lives these past few years. Being new to Glencoe, with a young child and newborn, we were in search for a place for our entire family. From the sermons and children's programs to events and community outreach, there is something here for all of us. We are honored to be a part of such a wonderful community."

Megan & Guy Donahue
New Members 2022

Katherine, Dan, Ben (5) and Alex (2), pictured above, live in Glencoe and are excited to be a part of the GUC community. Katherine grew up on the Northwest side of Chicago and Dan hails from Colorado. They enjoy family bike rides, beach time and wandering around the Botanic Gardens. You can catch them speaking Polish with their kids (Kat is first generation Polish and Dan is honing his language skills) or making sourdough pizzas on the grill.

The Hoenes family (Matt, Jess, Ellie (12) and Parker (9)), pictured right, has resided in Glencoe since 2015. They love the small town feel of the community and discovered GUC in 2020 while walking past an outdoor service one Sunday morning. They have been attending ever since and are excited to be taking the next step in becoming members of this joyful congregation! In their free time the Hoeneses are very involved in the North Shore youth sports scene and you'll often find them on the mound at Berlin Park, practicing football in their front yard, or hauling their paddle boards to Glencoe Beach in the early morning hours.

The Hoenes Family





Confirmation Group hiking into Crystal Lake, Northern Idaho

“ do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am
your God: I will strengthen you, I will help you”

Isaiah 41:10