

**GLEN RIDGE
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
ANNUAL REPORT
2023**



**As issued at the Annual Meeting
Sunday, February 25, 2024**

IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE VIII, SECTIONS 1 AND 4 OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE GLEN RIDGE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH; THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION IS CALLED FOR SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2024, TO MEET AT 11:15 AM FOR:

- 1. THE ELECTION OF OFFICERS**
- 2. VOTING ON THE 2024 BUDGET**
- 3. THE TRANSACTION OF SUCH OTHER BUSINESS AS MAY COME BEFORE THE MEETING.**

Meeting held in-person in the Sanctuary and via Zoom.

Carol Harpster

Carol Harpster

Secretary

THE COVENANT OF THE GLEN RIDGE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

We covenant with God and one another to be the church of Jesus Christ, loving God and our neighbors. With God's help:

- We shall come together to glorify and worship God, proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ and celebrate God's presence among us;
- We shall teach ourselves and our children the faith of the church and shall together follow in the ways of Christ;
- We shall share our beliefs by word and example and be a welcoming and caring home community where all persons may find their faith;
- We shall grow spiritually, nurture and strengthen each other, share our joys and concerns and treat each other and all people with respect, compassion, and dignity;
- We shall go where God calls us to offer faith and encouragement, extending a helping hand to all God's people;
- We shall participate in the ministries and mission of the United Church of Christ.

Relying on the power of God's Holy Spirit, we go forth to live and serve as Christians.

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*The following reports are not provided in this online version of the Annual Report:

- Pilgrim Preschool Treasurer’s Report
- Endowment Fund Assets
- Treasurer’s Report
- Proposed 2024 Budget

**ANNUAL MEETING
GLEN RIDGE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
February 25, 2024**

11:15 am in Sanctuary and via Zoom

- I. CALL TO ORDER BY MODERATOR** Sherry Brabham
- II. CONVENING PRAYER** Pastor Jeff Mansfield
- III. HYMN** “ALL ARE WELCOME”
- IV. CALL TO MEETING BY SECRETARY** Carol Harpster
- V. MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL MEETING**
The minutes of the Annual Meeting held on February 12, 2023 were approved by the Church Council at their March 1, 2023 meeting as authorized by the congregation.
- VI. IN THE LIFE OF CHURCH IN 2023** Sherry Brabham
Carol Harpster
1. Parish Clerk’s Report
 - a. Introduction of New Members
 - b. Remembrance of Members, family and friends who died in 2023
2. Moderator’s Message Sherry Brabham
- VII. CONFIRMATION OF QUORUM** Michael and Iryna Carey
- VIII. ACCEPTANCE OF ANNUAL REPORTS**
- IX. NEW BUSINESS**
1. Approval of the 2024 Budget Pam Figlar
 2. Constitution and By-Laws Review Sherry Brabham
 3. Report of the Nominating Committee John Dobbs
 - a. Nominations by petition
 - b. Election
- X. OTHER BUSINESS**
This is the time for Old Business not previously reported, the *Second Mile Award*, and the *Day One Award*, communications, words of appreciation for the work of the retiring officers, awards, etc.
- XI. MINUTES OF THE CURRENT MEETING**
The Moderator will request a motion to refer the minutes of this meeting to the Church Council for approval.
- XII. THE INSTALLATION OF CHURCH OFFICERS**
Pastor Jeff: Beloved, we’ve voted them in and now we’ve got to bless them in. We’re going to perform an Affirmation of Ministry, which is a way that we as the Church can recognize the diverse gifts of all our members and celebrate the particular ministries that each person is called to in our Church or out in the world.

I ask the newly elected officers and all those who will serve in an official role on the ministries to please come down and join me on the chancel.

You have been called by God in accordance with the faith and order of this Church to serve among us. You have heard the voice of this congregation and have accepted their call. Do you accept the office to which you have been elected, and will you faithfully discharge its duties as set forth in the Word of God and in the Constitution and Bylaws of the Congregation?

Response: I do and I will, with the help of God.

Pastor Jeff: *Do you promise to live fully into your commitment as both a leader of the Church and a faithful follower of Jesus?*

Response: I do, with the help of God.

Pastor Jeff: *Do you promise to exercise your ministry diligently and faithfully, showing God's love in all you do?*

Response: I do, with the help of God.

Question to the Congregation:

Pastor Jeff: *Members of this household of faith, you have heard the promises of our brothers and sisters and siblings in Christ who have answered God's call to service. Let us affirm our intention to live in covenant with them.*

Do you, the congregation of Glen Ridge Congregational Church, promise to celebrate the call of these newly elected leaders to serve our church?

Response: We do.

Pastor Jeff: *Do you promise to live in Covenant with our leaders, being partners, allies, and collaborators in their service?*

Response: We do, with the help of God.

Pastor Jeff: *Do you promise to love these leaders, to honor their work among us, to pray for their success, and to bless them in good times and in hard times?*

Response: We do, with the help of God.

Pastor Jeff: *Let us pray. Eternal God, you have called these people to serve you in this household of faith, which you have entrusted to our care and keeping. Send your Holy Spirit on them that they may serve among us with honor and faithfulness. Help them to be diligent in their duties that our Church may prosper in the mission you place before it. May their example prove worthy for all of us to follow, as we are united in Christ's ministry, to the glory of your name. Amen.*

XIII. HYMN

“GUIDE ME, O THOU GREAT JEHOVAH”

XIV MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING

XV. BENEDICTION

Pastor Jeff Mansfield

**GLEN RIDGE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
2024-2025 NOMINATIONS FOR FEBRUARY 2024 ANNUAL MEETING**

The Church Council encourages every one of you to participate in the life and mission of GRCC. We truly need your time and talents. Even if you are not an elected member of a specific ministry, we welcome you to attend any scheduled ministry meeting and/or to contribute to any specific, time-limited project that appeals to you. Know that every one of your contributions will make a difference and enhance the life of our church community and the people we serve.

CHURCH OFFICERS

Position	To Be Elected
President/Moderator	Sherry Brabham
Vice President	Marcia O’Grady
Secretary	Carol Harpster
Treasurer	Michael Brandell

MINISTRIES

Adult Education

Co-Chairs: Holly Eastman and John Dobbs

David Ellertson	Nadine Pappas
Rita Ellertson	Janet Mack
Bob Hodgson	

Ex-officio and volunteer members: none required

AP&P

Chair: Doug Steele

Sharon Harms	Dushont Marable
Iryna Carey	

Ex-officio and volunteer members: Trustee of the Garden of Memory – Jim Watson.

Children & Youth

Chair: Carol Harpster

Jill Baker Ansley	Jerry Melichar
Win Ansley	Victoria Solarino
Margo Di Stefano	Janet Spoerl
Nick Gsell	

Ex-officio and volunteer members: Director of Children’s Ministry – Tyra Brown;
Chair of Pilgrim Preschool Board.

Finance

Chair: TBD

Michael Brandell	Dennis Krien
Pam Figlar	Alden Provost
Gordon Hunziker	Linda Seyffarth

Ex-officio and volunteer members: Endowment Trustee – Tom Coleman;
Jerry Melichar and Assistant Treasurers.

Nominating

Chair: TBD

Ex-officio and volunteer members: Representative of immediate past president;
Representative of Women’s Association – TBD.

Outreach & Mission

Chair: Alicia Harrison

Susan Krein	Francie Starnes
Lynne Palmer	
Susan Hughes	

Ex-officio members: Delegate to the NJ Association and the Central Atlantic Conference: Janet Spoerl.

Parish Life

Chair: Amy Haggerty

Jill Baker Ansley	Janet Mack
Win Ansley	Bonnie Mohan
Patti Gsell	

Ex-officio and volunteer members: Parish Clerk – TBD; Women’s Association Delegate –TBD.

Stewardship

Co-Chairs: TBD

Ex-officio and volunteer members: Minister Jeff Mansfield; Past Stewardship Co-Chairs Rebecca and David Mitchell.

Worship

Co-Chairs: Nicole (Nikki) Ramirez and Wynne Zalewski

Rita Ellertson	
Jim Watson	

Ex-officio and volunteer members: Minister Jeff Mansfield; Minister of Music Tom Mustachio; Co-Chairs of the Music Committee - David Dik and Jill Simmons

OTHER ELECTED POSITIONS

Position	Members to be Elected
Parish Clerk	TBD
Historians	Marcia O’Grady
	Ann Bronneck
Auditor	TBD
Assistant Treasurers	Chris Ely
	Pam Figlar
	Gordon Hunziker
	Dennis Krein
	Linda Seyffarth
	Craig Wood

DELEGATES TO CAC AND NJ ASSOCIATION

Janet Spoerl	
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The Nominating Committee:
John Dobbs – Chair
Lynne Palmer
Marsha Watson

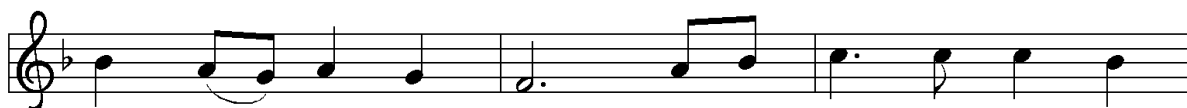
All Are Welcome



1 Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safe - ly
2 Let us build a house where proph-ets speak, and words are strong and
3 Let us build a house where love is found in wa - ter, wine and
4 Let us build a house where hands will reach be - yond the wood and
5 Let us build a house where all are named, their songs and vi - sions



live, a place where saints and chil - dren tell how
true, where all God's chil - dren dare to seek to
wheat: a ban - quet hall on ho - ly ground where
stone to heal and strength - en, serve and teach, and
heard and loved and trea - sured, taught and claimed as



hearts learn to for - give. Built of hopes and dreams and
dream God's reign a - new. Here the cross shall stand as
peace and jus - tice meet. Here the love of God, through
live the Word they've known. Here the out - cast and the
words with - in the Word. Built of tears and cries and



vi - sions, rock of faith and vault of grace; here the love of
wit - ness and as sym - bol of God's grace; here as one we
Je - sus, is re - vealed in time and space; as we share in
strang-er bear the im - age of God's face; let us bring an
laugh-ter, prayers of faith and songs of grace, let this house pro -



Christ shall end di - vi - sions:
claim the faith of Je - sus:
Christ the feast that frees us: All are wel - come,
end to fear and dan - ger:
claim from floor to raf - ter:



all are wel - come, all are wel - come in this place.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Music: TWO OAKS, Marty Haugen

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Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

CWM RHONDDA 8.7.8.7.8.7.7

William Williams, 1745

Stanza 1 trans. Peter Williams, 1771

Stanzas 2-3 trans. William Williams, 1772

John Hughes, 1907

1. Guide me, O Thou great Je - ho - vah, Pil - grim through this
2. O - pen now the crys - tal foun - tain, Whence the heal - ing
3. When I tread the verge of Jor - dan, Bid my anx - ious

bar - ren land; I am weak, but Thou art might - y; Hold me
stream doth flow; Let the fire and cloud - y pil - lar Lead me
fears sub - side; Death of death, and hell's de - struc - tion, Land me

with Thy power - ful hand; Bread of heav - en, bread of heav - en,
all my jour - ney through; Strong de - liv - erer, strong de - liv - erer,
safe on Ca - naan's side; Songs of prais - es, songs of prais - es

Feed me till I want no more, Feed me till I want no more.
Be Thou still my strength and shield, Be Thou still my strength and shield.
I will ev - er give to Thee, I will ev - er give to Thee.

SENIOR MINISTER'S REPORT

Beloved,

As we prepare for another year of ministry together, I look back on 2023 with a profound sense of gratitude and hope. This year has been marked by significant transitions, celebrations of inclusivity, and the strengthening of community ties both within our congregation and with our neighbors. In the ebb and flow of arrivals and departures, our congregation has embraced change without altering our commitment to being a bright light of God's love in the world.

Our year started off with three tragic events: the tragic passing of a beautiful young soul, Nathan Latifi; a hate-fueled attack against our Jewish neighbors at Temple Ner Tamid; and an attempt at censorship against LGBTQ books at our town library. Our church played an important part in responding with healing love to all three of these events.

Nathan's funeral, a standing-room only event, held within the embrace of our sanctuary, united individuals of all ages and faiths in profound grief over his tragic loss and in profound gratitude for all he was (and will continue to be) for those who love him. It was a reminder of what an important role we play as a spiritual center for our community and as a parish church to the otherwise religiously unaffiliated in Glen Ridge.

At the same time, an act of violence and fear struck the heart of Bloomfield. The firebombing at Temple Ner Tamid, a reprehensible act of antisemitism meant to strike fear into all of our Jewish neighbors, instead mobilized a strong collective repudiation across our community. In February, the Interfaith Rally Against Hate, hosted by Temple Ner Tamid, became an embodiment of that stalwart interfaith unity—an overwhelming testament to our collective resolve that hatred shall find no harbor in our community.

As part of our own commitment to inclusivity and diversity, we proudly stood against the censorship aimed at our town library and at our local LGBTQ community. Our vocal and visible participation in the Glen Ridge United Against Book Bans campaign was an affirmation of our unwavering support for the idea that Glen Ridge is a diverse community that values inclusion and dialogue and that we support our LGBTQ neighbors and young people. Gathering in Robinson Hall before the library meeting, our congregation and our neighbors united in values, action, and fellowship. Our victory was always assured and, in the end, the campaign unified and uplifted us. I was proud that our church took such an active role.

Our commitment to diversity and to the lives and inherent worth of LGBTQ people continued to play out over the course of the year, culminating in a momentous decision that will shape our identity for years to come. On Sunday, June 11, our congregation, unified in purpose and spirit, voted unanimously to become an Open and Affirming (ONA) congregation of the United Church of Christ. The Pride flag that now regularly hangs from our tower is not merely a banner but a vibrant symbol of this commitment—a visible declaration that our doors are open to all of God's children, regardless of their identity.

Sadly, the end of June brought the departure of Maira Hernandez-Kinloch, our esteemed church school director. Mrs. H-K, as we affectionately call her, has been instrumental in nurturing the faith development of our young members, and her absence is deeply felt. We honor her years of faithful service and wish her God's richest blessings in her new endeavors.

In her stead, we welcomed Tyra Brown as our Director of Children's Ministries this summer. Tyra, a beloved member of our community, stepped into this role with creativity, enthusiasm, and a profound understanding of our church's mission. Her arrival promises to foster a sustained, nurturing environment for our church's children as they grow in faith.

The transitions continued as we bid farewell to Shanyse Strickland, our Office Administrator, in August, as she left to devote more time to her music career. In September, we were blessed again, as Alicia Harrison transitioned from a familiar face in the pews to the hub of our church operations. Alicia's seamless takeover as Office Administrator has been wonderful, and we appreciate the skills, understanding, and passion she brings to the work.

In September, we began our second joint confirmation program with Union Congregational Church. This year we added a new event—a "lock in" overnight retreat. It was a first for our confirmands and a monumental hit among both kids and volunteers. This spirited gathering, filled with laughter and discovery, provided moments of deep connection, and I believe, the seeds of lifelong faith.

September also saw the launch of our Ecumenical Youth Ministry project, an ambitious venture that unites five area churches: Glen Ridge Congregational Church, Union Congregational Church, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Grace Presbyterian Church, and First Lutheran Church. We're pooling resources to offer our middle and high school youth robust programs, fostering fellowship, spiritual growth, and service opportunities.

As we turn our gaze to the coming year, we are reminded of the words from Isaiah: "See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?" I think we did see it in 2023—in deepening our ties to our community, in increasing the visibility of our long-standing values, and in recommitting ourselves to our youth.

May we enter 2024 with open hearts, ready to embrace the new things God is doing among us, filled with joy for the journey.

Submitted respectfully and with love,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Jeff Kinloch". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Pastor Jeff

MINISTER OF MUSIC'S REPORT 2023

I am grateful to all who participate in our ministry of music – choir members, committee members, and members of the congregation. The congregation is the *Great Choir* of the church. We sing together the great hymns of the church, including music from a variety of styles and periods. We sing in praise, confession, meditation, prayer, and proclamation of our faith. Our music is *people . . . to . . . people*. Thank you for 15 years of mutual ministry.

Choirs

Choral music is the heart of our program. I am grateful for the ministry of all our choirs. The following individuals have participated in our music ministry during all or part of 2023, which includes portions of two academic years. I apologize for any inadvertent name omissions. Names in bold were promoted to the next level choir in September 2023.

JOYFUL NOISE (Ages 3–5)

Benjamin Brosius	Simone Howell	Chloe Martinez
Elia-Martine Frossell	Danika Marable	Jerome Mohan
Julian Gilmore		Julian Solarino

CHERUB CHOIR (Grades 1–2)

Miriam Ansley	Lily Moyer	Will Schaller
Jonathan Jimenez	Avery Ramirez	Larkin Tiwari

CAROL CHOIR (Grades 3–8)

Henry Ansley	Avery Ramirez	Maeve Taylor
Vienna Gilmore	Gabriel Ramirez	Rhoda-Jane Taylor
Jeremy Jimenez	Noelle Schaller	Stuart Taylor
Noelle Kim	Alexandra Solarino	Vivian Taylor
Pia Moyer		Wren Tiwari

CHAPEL BELLS (Grades 3–12)

Henry Ansley	Victor Ito	Rhoda-Jane Taylor
Vienna Gilmore	Jeremy Jimenez	Wren Tiwari
Blake Harrison	Pia Moyer	Elisabeth Weber
Sophie Harrison	Avery Ramirez	Gabriella Weber
	Gabriel Ramirez	

CARILLON BELLS (Adults–H.S.)

Karen Augis	David Dik (sub)	Jerry Melichar
Deborah Brandell	Patti Gsell	Nicole Ramirez
Tom Coleman	Susan Hughes	Jill Simmons
Janet Dickinson	Gordon Hunziker	Trisha Turiano (sub)
Andrew Dik	Robin Jimenez (sub)	Wynne Zalewski
	Linda Kerr	

CHANCEL CHOIR (Adults–H.S.)

Deborah Brandell	Mollie Gilmore	Nadine Pappas-Wilkes
Michael Brown	Bob Hodgson	Nikki Ramirez
Theodore Chletsos	Susan Hughes	Todd Russell
Tom Coleman	Robin Jimenez	Diane Schaming
David Dik	Reever Julian	Jill Simmons
Rita Ellertson	David Kerr	Janet Spoerl
Runyu Feng	Susan Krien	Elizabeth Taylor
Olivia Gasper	Bill McConnell	Dorothy Waldt
	David Mitchell	

GLEN RIDGE CHORAL SOCIETY (Adults–H.S.)

Members of the Chancel Choir, plus:

Lee Adams	Pamela Figlar	Mary Lou Malyska
Eileen Arcangeli	Margo Garrison	Beth Mead
Anthony Azari	Karen Jacobsen	Elizabeth Perryman
Grace Baumgarten	Roger Jacobsen	Patrick Preblich
Robyn Burns	Kathleen Kelly	Bill Schaller
Lisa DeLuca	Jennifer Kohnen	Cia Siebert
Paula Ely	Sarah Lopez	Matt Tuleson

Special Thanks to:

- Nikki Ramirez, our Chapel Bell Assistant through May 2023.
- Janet Spoerl, our Chapel Bell Assistant since September 2023.
- Diane Schaming, for leading our Joyful Noise Choir (ages 3-5) through May 2023, then assisting with the Cherub and Carol Choirs beginning in September 2023.
- Elizabeth Herr Taylor for helping lead our Cherub Choir through May 2023.
- Deborah Brandell, for her continuing service as Chancel Choir/Choral Society President.
- Members of the Music Committee for their support: Deborah Brandell, David Dik, and Jill Simmons.
- Jill Simmons, for her dedicated service as our Music Librarian and Vestment Supervisor.
- Bill McConnell, Nikki Ramirez and Todd Russell, Music Library assistants
- All of our choir parents, who regularly make choir a priority for their family. You are a blessing!
- My colleagues – Pastor Jeff, Tyra, Alicia, Octavio, Vernon, Erika, and Mary J – who share our mutual ministry.

Music Ministry Highlights

- + **CHANCEL CHOIR** – our adult music leaders, whose care and dedication to their ministry is a great example for our younger choristers. We are blessed with an exceptional adult choir. The Chancel Choir forms the core of the GLEN RIDGE CHORAL SOCIETY.
- + **GLEN RIDGE CHORAL SOCIETY** – for singers who wish to sing only for special concerts. They sang the Spring Community Concert, *A Disney Spectacular* in May, honoring Disney’s 100th anniversary; Maurice Duruflé’s *Requiem* for All Saints’ Sunday and were the major choral force for *Welcome Christmas* in December.
- + **CARILLON BELLS** – our adult handbell choir provides a first-rate example of commitment and enthusiasm for our younger ringers. They rang in worship nearly every month, except summer.

- + **CHILDREN'S/YOUTH CHOIRS** – Our children's choirs included *Joyful Noise* (ages 3-6), *Cherub Choir* (grades 1-2), *Carol Choir* (grades 3-8), *Chapel Bells* (grades 3-12). Our young people rehearsed weekly and sang and rang approximately once per month during the program year. The children sang in the *Disney Spectacular* concert in May, and in *Welcome Christmas!* in December. We had a great influx of new 3rd and 4th grade bell ringers in September 2023. A brand-new crop of ringers in the making! I'm so grateful to our children – singers and ringers – for their dedication and amazing spirit.
- + **SOLOISTS** – We are grateful to the following musicians who shared solo vocal music for services throughout the year: Deborah Brandell, Mike Brown, Ted Chletsos, David Dik, Runyu Feng, Olivia Gasper, Bob Hodgson, Reeve Julian, Kathleen Kelly, Dave Kerr, Elizabeth Perryman, Todd Russell, Diane Schaming, and Elizabeth Taylor.
- + **INSTRUMENTALISTS** – Thanks to the instrumentalists from the congregation who so generously shared their talents with us: Patti Gsell, *flute*; Jill Simmons, *piano, organ, cymbells*; Audrey Wood, *piano*; Craig Wood, *flute*; We are blessed to have these talented musicians in our congregation! We were also fortunate to have many guest instrumentalists enhance our musical offerings throughout the year.
- + **PANCAKE SUPPER** – The annual Shrove Tuesday (Mardi Gras) Pancake Supper was back on February 21, 2023. We served 132 tasty meals and provided Take-Out orders and limited delivery service.
- + **MAUNDY THURSDAY** – Woodwind triple-threat, Rob Middleton added saxophone, clarinet and flute accompaniment to the musical offerings of the service. The Chancel Choir presented a number of heart-warming anthems.
- + **EASTER** – Thanks to our Chancel Choir, Carillon Bells, trumpeters Mike Korbin, Andrew Dik, and percussionist, Kimberly Burja for making this a most joyful in-person resurrection celebration.
- + **PIPE ORGAN REFURBISHMENT** – The organ operating system gave up the ghost during Holy Week, requiring all stops to be drawn by hand, severely limiting registration choices. There was no longer an available quick fix, as the required parts were now obsolete. David Dik was quickly appointed chair of the ad hoc Organ Refurbishment Team, contacted Bart Brown, research was done, calls and visits were made and by May 23, 2023 we had a signed contract with the Peragallo Pipe Organ Company to refurbish the organ console and operating system. I am so very grateful to David for his expertise in guiding this project; to Tom Coleman and the Endowment committee for helping to make this happen; and overwhelmed by the congregation's generous response to the fundraising efforts. Finishing touches on the organ are still being completed as of the writing of this report. The pipe organ will be re-dedicated in a recital by Wanamaker Grand Court Organist, Paul Richard Conte on Sunday, March 24 at 4:30pm with a festive reception to follow. The concert is being presented in Bart's memory.
- + **SUMMER MUSIC** – Special music was offered each Sunday during the summer months. Thanks to all the vocalists and instrumentalists (listed above) for their musical offerings.
- + **ALL SAINTS' SUNDAY** – October 29: *Requiem* by Maurice Duruflé was presented by the Chancel Choir and Choral Society as the core of this worship service. The Requiem was accompanied by two trumpets, harp and timpani.
- + **H. BARTLETT BROWN MEMORIAL SERVICE** – The Chancel Choir sang for Bart's memorial service on November 18. Bart's niece, Gwen McCoy sang a solo of Albert Hay Malotte's "The Lord's Prayer." Even though we were using the replacement electronic instrument, we gave Bart a loving musical send-off.

- + **WELCOME CHRISTMAS! *Concert and Carol Sing*** – December 10: 268 audience members, 69 musicians, and one seeing-eye dog in training enjoyed an afternoon of very special holiday musical offerings by our Glen Ridge Choral Society, Chancel Choir, Carillon Bells, Children’s Choir, brass, percussion, piano, and organ.
- + **BELL SUNDAY** – December 17: Always a spirit-filled service. Our two handbell choirs – Carillon Bells, and Chapel Bells rang. The Chancel Choir and children's choirs all sang. Great joy filled the room!
- + **CHRISTMAS EVE** – We had one Festival Family Christmas Eve Service at 5pm, with music by the Chancel Choir, Children’s Choirs, Chapel Bells, organ, piano, trumpet, and timpani.
- + **COMMUNITY HOLIDAY SING** – We did not co-sponsor the sing-along this year due to the timing of the Advent and Christmas seasons.
- + **BANNERS** – Thanks to David Dik, John Dobbs, Nikki and Gabe Ramirez, and Wynne Zalewski for taking care of the seasonal transition of the streamer banners that hang above us in the sanctuary.
- + **COMMUNITY CONCERTS** – See information and data in the report of the Music Committee.

Soli Deo Gloria!

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas A. Mustachio
Minister of Music

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRY ANNUAL REPORT

In August, I was offered the position of Director of Children's Ministry at GRCC and I was very excited to accept this position. I have worked as a volunteer in the Church School for many years and I look forward to making a difference in the lives of our children and their faith formation with the help of families and the congregation. I am ready to lead the Church School to new and different adventures as well as the traditional events that we all love and treasure. We started the school year with the Pizza and Pops Blast Off Event for families to talk about our exciting new year of Music and Church School. Mr. Mustachio, Mrs. Harpster and I hosted the event and spoke to families about events and programs for our Children and Youth.

Church School started after Labor Day. We continue to use the Sparkhouse Lectionary for curriculum for all grades from Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 7. It engages students with activities, games, and crafts. Students and teachers read the Spark series Bibles which change from a Bible storybook to a more regular Bible format as the students grow. God's eye crafts and finger knitting were some of the favorite activities this fall.

My heartfelt thanks to all our very dedicated volunteer teachers - Carol Harpster, Amber Brosius, Jill Baker, Win Ansley, Jennifer Bhujle, Nick Gsell, and our substitute teacher Jerry Melichar. Thank you to our Childcare team, Jessica and Brenda, who have left to return to their homes. We welcome our new arrivals Paula, Magally, and Marissa. We could not provide our program without your help. Thank you for all your hard work and dedication to the children and Church School.

On September 24, we presented the Third Grade Bibles. Congratulations to Avery Ramirez, Tucker Barrett, and Cosette Frossell. We historically have given Bibles to the third graders for their personal spiritual growth. In church school, they learn to use their Bible to find what they need. They take their Bibles from class to class, as the Bibles belong to them.

Our service projects for the fall were collecting pancake mix and syrup for Toni's Kitchen, and donating our time, talent, and treasures to the GRCC Fall Rummage Sale. Many Church School students and their families volunteered to help with the sale. It is so much fun to be together for this event finding treasures in others' donated items and making money for charity. It is amazing watching the children grow through these events! We just started collecting soup for a senior center in Montclair and a food pantry. We will continue to collect through the "Souper Bowl" to tackle hunger.

Advent Experience was a very successful community event, even though the weather did not cooperate. We had over 100 people who visited the Nativity scene outdoors with the animals and a dedication to Bob Hayes by Jan Spoerl accompanied by church members and families. The next step was inside Robinson Hall for the craft extravaganza and refreshments. We had Seashell Angels, Picture Wreath Ornaments, Jesus Birth Ornaments, Advent booklets, Wood Slice word ornaments, and a Bonus Table. All had fun being crafty, and while the crafts were drying, Mrs. Brown read the book Mortimer's Christmas Manger to close the event.

Advent Experience takes a lot of behind-the-scenes work. Our special thanks go out to Jan Spoerl, Matt Tulleson, Carol Harpster, Swift Animal Farms, and all our volunteer families that helped outside at the Nativity and inside with the crafts. A special thank you to Joan Hayes for Advent Experience and our rebuilding of the Nativity.

Moving through the holiday season, we enjoyed Bell Sunday, Christmas Eve, and New Year's Eve together as families in the Worship Service with coloring and activity pages and lots of Christmas joy.

Vacation Bible School will be at the end of June in 2024. We look forward to welcoming our congregation, and the community, to this fun camp week event at GRCC.

We are blessed with the many new faces who come to our church and Church School, and we look forward to seeing you again this next year. Please let me know if you have any ideas for the Church School, Vacation Bible School, or other events. We are busy working on the rest of the school year and would love to hear from you.

May the light of God surround you!

Peace and Blessings,

Tyra Brown,
Director of Children's Ministry at GRCC

2023 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COUNCIL SECRETARY

2023 was a big year for our church as we officially became a United Church of Christ (UCC) Open and Affirming Church. We gained new members and families, said good-bye to those who moved away and honored the lives of several long-standing members who passed away.

Additionally, there were several staffing changes. Maira Hernandez-Kinloch, serving as Church School Director since 2018, resigned to take care of her elderly father. Long-time Church member and Pilgrim Building Manager, Tyra Brown, was hired and given the new title of Director of Children’s Ministry. In the office, Shanyse Strickland left on tour to pursue her musical career and was replaced by long-time Church member, Alicia Harrison. Welcome to Tyra and Alicia and thank you to Maira and Shanyse for your dedication and service to Glen Ridge Congregational Church.

Your Council continued to meet primarily in-person and via Zoom and focused on growing our membership and improving church finances.

Throughout the year, I had the privilege of recording the business and policy decisions voted on by the Council and summarizing the dynamic discussions which took place during Council and other special meetings. The information below includes all motions and proposals made during the above-mentioned meetings and touches on other major topics of discussion or special accomplishments.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: Minutes of the 2022 Annual Meeting and all Council meetings were approved via motion, second and group vote.

MOTION/HIGHLIGHT	MOVED BY	SECOND	DISPOSITION
January 24, 2023 Council Meeting			
A motion to approve the minutes from the December 20, 2022 meeting was made.	Ann Bronneck	Karen Augis	Approved
Pam Figlar presented the 2023 budget. After review and discussion, the Council moved to approve for inclusion in the Annual Report and presentation at the Annual Meeting.	Pam Figlar	Nikki Ramirez	Approved
February 12, 2023 Annual Meeting			
Moderator Dorothy Waldt called the 135 th Annual Meeting to order at 11:19 AM.			
Deborah and Michael Brandell reported there were at least 75 members present, more than the required quorum of 53.			
Minutes from the last Annual Meeting on February 22, 2022 were approved by the Church Council at the March 22, 2022 Council meeting as authorized by the congregation.	Karen Augis	Linda Woodbury	Approved

MOTION/HIGHLIGHT	MOVED BY	SECOND	DISPOSITION
<p>Louis Augis presented the Parish Clerk's Report via Power Point. New members for 2022 were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ranya and David Barrett • Sarah Hoffman and Dushont Marable • Confirmands: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dylan Arnett ○ Devin Carroll ○ Andrew Downey ○ Mason Kamil ○ Zach Konetzni ○ Kate Machemar ○ Fiona Smyth ○ Alex Stolte ○ Gabriella Weber 			
<p>A motion to accept all annual reports was made.</p>	Carol Harpster	Deb Brandell	Approved
<p>The 2023 budget was presented by Pam Figlar, Interim Finance Chair. A motion to approve the budget was made.</p>	Pam Figlar	Dorothy Waldt	Approved
<p>The 2023 Nominating slate was presented by John Dobbs. A motion to approve the slate was made.</p>	Jerry Melichar	Carol Harpster	Approved
<p>The installation of new officers and members of the various ministries as well as the acceptance of ministry reports was accomplished with a litany of prayer and commitment.</p>			
<p>The Second Mile Award was presented by Dorothy Waldt to Rebecca Mitchell for her dedication to the church in many ways including Council Secretary, Stewardship, Rummage Sale, Chili-Fest, Syria Supper Club and Parish Life.</p>			
<p>A "second" Second Mile Award was presented by Carol Harpster to outgoing Council President and Moderator, Dorothy Waldt. Carol cited Dorothy's endless contributions to the church over the years including Stewardship Chair, Helping Hands coordinator, Antiques Show, and Council President/Moderator.</p>			

MOTION/HIGHLIGHT	MOVED BY	SECOND	DISPOSITION
A new award, The Day One Award, was presented by Dorothy Waldt to Jerry Melichar for his quick entry into church volunteerism including teaching Sunday School and serving on C&Y and Nominating.			
A motion to forward the minutes of this annual meeting to the next Council for review and approval was made.	Carol Harpster	Nadine Pappas-Wilkes	Approved
A motion to adjourn the Annual Meeting at 12:23 pm was made.	Dorothy Waldt	Carol Harpster	Approved
March 1, 2023 Council Meeting			
Sherry Brabham welcomed new and returning Council members.			
A motion to approve the minutes from the January 24, 2023 Council Meeting was made.	Rebecca Mitchell	Karen Augis	Approved
A motion to approve the minutes from the February 12, 2023 Annual Meeting was made.	Rebecca Mitchell	Doug Steele	Approved
A motion to approve Pam Figlar as Interim Finance Chair, with all the rights and responsibilities that go with that title, was made.	John Dobbs	Alicia Harrison	Approved
April 5, 2023 Council Meeting			
A motion to approve the minutes from the March 21, 2023 Council meeting was made.	Carol Harpster	Pam Figlar	Approved
There was some discussion, led by John Dobbs, on the Open and Affirming process.			
Council is reviewing art in the sanctuary and looking at ways to make the sanctuary more inclusive.			
Pastor Jeff Mansfield reported on the search for a shared Youth Minister and a new Director of Children's Ministry to replace outgoing Maira Hernandez-Kinloch.			
April 25, 2023 Council Meeting			
A motion to approve the minutes from the April 5, 2023 Council meeting was made.	Carol Harpster	Rebecca Mitchell	Approved
Nikki Ramirez reported on the Open and Affirming (O&A) initiative.			
Tom Mustachio reported on the failure of the sanctuary organ and plans to repair/rebuild, including fundraising efforts.			

MOTION/HIGHLIGHT	MOVED BY	SECOND	DISPOSITION
May 23, 2023 Council Meeting			
A motion to approve the minutes from the April 25, 2023 Council meeting was made. David Dik and Tom Coleman reported on the cost of the organ repair at \$190,000. 90% has already been funded.	Carol Harpster	Marcia O'Grady	Approved
A motion to move ahead with the proposal presented by the Music Committee to refurbish the organ by Peragallo Music Company at a total cost of \$190,000 was made.	Sherry Brabham	Carol Harpster	Approved
A motion to approve the proposed Open and Affirming (O&A) statement was made. Click here. or go to Core Values on the About Us page of the Church website at www.glenridgecong.org	Carol Harpster	Holly Eastman	Approved
June 11, 2023 Special Meeting of the Congregation In-Person and via Zoom			
A motion to approve the Open and Affirming (O&A) statement and amend the By-Laws was made. Click here. or go to Core Values on the About Us page of the Church website at www.glenridgecong.org Sharon Harms and Patti Gsell reported that more than 75 members were in attendance satisfying the quorum criteria of 53.	Carol Harpster	David Kerr	Approved
Motion to adjourn was made at 11:45 am.	Carol Harpster	Sherry Brabham	Approved
June 27, 2023 Council Meeting			
A motion to approve the minutes from the May 23, 2023 Council meeting was made.	Nikki Ramirez	Marcia O'Grady	Approved
A motion to approve the minutes from the June 11, 2023 Special Congregation Meeting was made.	Nikki Ramirez	Marcia O'Grady	Approved
A motion to approve the resolution in appreciation of Maira Hernandez-Kinloch, citing diligent service as Church School Director since 2018, was made.	Holly Eastman	Doug Steele	Approved

MOTION/HIGHLIGHT	MOVED BY	SECOND	DISPOSITION
September 26, 2023 Council Meeting			
<p>A motion to approve the minutes from the June 27, 2023 Council meeting was made.</p> <p>Pastor Jeff Mansfield reported on summer hires, including Tyra Brown, Director of Children’s Ministry, Alicia Harrison, Office Administrator and Christina Carter, shared Youth Director.</p> <p>Rebecca and David Mitchell reported on the Stewardship Campaign with goals and schedule.</p>	Rebecca Mitchell	Carol Harpster	Approved
October 24, 2023 Council Meeting			
<p>A motion to approve the minutes from the September 26, 2023 Council meeting was made.</p> <p>Rebecca and David Mitchell reported on the Stewardship Campaign kick off on October 22: Because of YOU, Our Church Changes Lives.</p>	Carol Harpster	Marcia O’Grady	Approved
December 20, 2023 Council Meeting			
<p>A motion to approve the minutes from the October 24, 2023 Council meeting was made.</p> <p>Pam Figlar discussed a draft of 2024 budget.</p> <p>John Dobbs reported on Nominating and discussed bulletin inserts and a schedule of ministry speakers from the pulpit to better educate our congregation on what ministries do and what is needed.</p> <p>Rebecca and David Mitchell gave an update on the Stewardship Campaign.</p> <p>Council ministries discussed events/programs for January – June 2024.</p>	Carol Harpster	Rebecca Mitchell	Approved

Respectfully submitted by Carol Harpster, Council Secretary

MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The Ministry of Children and Youth (C&Y) oversees faith formation, education, and activities for everyone ages 0–18. C&Y provides programming nearly every single week.

This was a year of change for C&Y as we bid farewell to our Church School Director, Maira Hernandez-Kinlock, aka Mrs. H-K, who retired to take care of her elderly father. We appreciate the dedication, joy, enthusiasm and strong faith Mrs. H-K (and her husband, Mr. Joe) brought to our children each week.

We welcomed the return of long-time church member and former C&Y Chair, Tyra Brown, as our newly titled Director of Youth Ministry. Tyra hit the ground running and has quickly made the program her own with many new ideas and initiatives.

Special thanks to Jennifer Bhujle for her dedication, attention to detail and involvement with this ministry well beyond her term of office as C&Y Chair. In addition to these duties, Jennifer routinely taught Sunday School and helped plan and teach Vacation Bible School this past summer.

We are grateful for all the children and youth and their families who participated in and supported our programs this year. We are equally grateful for the volunteers who helped make everything happen — from teaching Church School and Vacation Bible School to helping with the Advent Experience inside and outside as you continue to invest in our children and youth!

FAITH FORMATION AND EDUCATION

Church School

Church School met weekly during the school year under the direction of Maira Hernandez-Kinloch and, beginning this past fall, Tyra Brown. Classes were offered for pre-K through 7th grade. Childcare was available for those ages 3 and under during the school year.

Church School attendance continued to be steady with the usual dips in attendance on holiday weekends.

Church School continued to run with a bare bones staff of dedicated volunteer teachers. We are grateful for their dedication each week as well as that of our local au pairs and nannies who assist with childcare and the 3-year-old – Kindergarten class.

While Church School was on hiatus over the summer, children were invited to join their families for the worship service. Children were provided with activity bulletins that correlated with the lectionary readings. Coloring supplies were also available.

Baptism

There were eleven baptisms this year which are detailed in the Parish Clerk's Report.

Second Communion

Realizing that our Church School children are generally in Church School during Worship and Communion, an initiative called "Second" Communion was undertaken geared toward 2nd graders. In February, Pastor Jeff conducted a class for students and their parents, providing an age-appropriate history and theology of communion as well as a discussion of the prayers and elements used. In March,

two of our 2nd graders participated in the communion service by helping to lay the table and inviting the congregation to participate.

3rd Grade Bibles

C&Y presented Spark Bibles to four 3rd graders. In preparation for this milestone, in Church School class they learned about the Bible in general, practiced finding passages, and did a “scavenger hunt” to find fun Bible facts.

Confirmation

There were no confirmands this year. Our joint program with Union Congregational Church in Upper Montclair resumed this past fall with a combined 8th and 9th grade class. Confirmation is scheduled for May 2024.

SERVICE, MISSION, AND OUTREACH

Family Faith

Led by Janet Spoerl (Jan), Family Faith is an intergenerational group comprised primarily of families with elementary school children who meet and work together to grow in faith. Generally, the group meets once a month for activity, learning about faith, and sharing food/fellowship. Flexibility rules. Sometimes there are 10 folks involved and sometimes 50. Sometimes the itinerant Mrs. Spoerl takes projects and ideas to the home when weather or calendar schedules make meeting together difficult.

The year started using the 3 GLs (God’s love of children, neighbor, and the environment), a UCC initiative. In June, Family Faith had a big farewell party for the Ito family. Family Faith loves to be together and are great participants with major activities like Celebration Sunday and Advent Experience. Many of the children and adults sing in choirs.

A new initiative called “Just Act for Peace” started in January of 2024. The study features studying social justice issues: all the biggies – racism, antisemitism, bullying, Indigenous People, climate, mental health, and voter registration. It is a program aligned with the UCC social justice program called “Just Peace”. Each individual, as well as family groups, set INTENTIONAL goals for what they will try to do to create PEACE. Most meetings will be at 11:15 on Sunday mornings; sometimes it will be a total group meeting to study a different aspect of social justice while sometimes folks will “check in” with how they are achieving personal goals. Of course, fun events will happen, too. We like to be together! We are open to change and hard work.

All are welcome to join us. We are now called Family Faith and Friends!

MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUPS

Led by Pastor Jeff Mansfield, a consortium of five local churches worked together to hire and share a Youth Ministry Coordinator to continue the faith formation of middle and high school youth and provide them with service opportunities. Unfortunately, the new hire did not work out and a search is underway for a replacement. In the meantime, Pastor Jeff, Tyra Brown and other local ministers are managing the program. Events this past year included working at Toni’s Kitchen and other local organizations.

C&Y EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Church School Initiatives

C&Y supported Mrs. H-K and Mrs. Brown with several activities throughout the year: Souper Bowl canned soup/beans collection, the Way to the Cross event on Palm Sunday, Japanese Children's Day on May 5, a Pizza and Pops end-of-summer get-together, and pancake and syrup collection. Plans are well underway to offer additional service and program opportunities in 2024.

Children's Sunday

The theme of this worship service was "This is the day that the Lord has made." Children participated in the service by reading scripture, singing songs, and collecting the offering. There was a puppet show as well as a Children's Moment.

Senior Recognition Sunday

Four graduating high school seniors were recognized during this service. Two participated by doing readings, while two others offered personal reflections. Scholarships were presented by Parish Life.

Vacation Bible School (VBS)

VBS had a fun, successful return camp in June. The week's theme was "Hero Hotline." Of note, half of the children who attended were non-Church members. Each day children rotated through Bible lessons, crafts, movement, and music. The week culminated with a "show" for their family and friends.

Advent Experience

The Advent Experience was held on the first Sunday of Advent. Outside were live animals at the stable and a dramatic reading of the Christmas story led by Pastor Jeff and Jan Spoerl. Inside were cookie-decorating, crafts, ornament-making, and a Christmas story read by Mrs. Brown. Despite the nasty weather, this event drew ~150 people from both GRCC and the wider community. The stable and animals were once again dedicated to Bob Hayes who passed away in 2022. Bob had been a big supporter of this outdoor nativity from its inception.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carol Harpster

Ministry of Children & Youth

PILGRIM PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR'S REPORT

January-June 2023

The start of the new year brought Pilgrim a new sense of order. We bonded as a new team of teachers, began recognizing the challenges children born into COVID-19 bring, and learned how to adapt to this new world. We now take COVID-19 in stride, have protocols that the parents support, and have embraced our new “normal”.

2023 was a licensing year for Pilgrim Preschool, and I am thrilled that we passed with flying colors! I want to thank the GRCC for understanding and supporting Pilgrim in our mission to keep Pilgrim's reputation intact with the NJCCIS. I especially want to thank Shanyse Strickland and Alicia Harrison for forwarding all those fire certificates and helping with the many fire drills!

In April, Pilgrim Preschool thanked our wonderful parents with a Parents Appreciation Night, which included delicious Mexican food from our own Mezoco Catering, excellent music from the local band ABCD, and an art exhibit of our students' spring artwork. Thank you to Stephanie Haller, Jill Csuka, and Cliona Stack, our board parent representatives, for the lovely decorations, and the teachers and Board President Carol Harpster for excellent bartending skills and for going above and beyond with the heavy lifting. A special shout out to Lorraine Brown, without whose budgeting wisdom we could not do any of these special programs. The parents and staff had a wonderful time, and we are eternally grateful to all who helped.

We ended a very successful year with an end-of-the-year performance by the children and Maira Hernandez-Kinloch on the stage in Robinson Hall. This is the first indoor performance we have had for parents since the onset of COVID. What a joyful occasion!

September-December 2023

School started with a bang this fall. This fall, we offer weekly Spanish classes taught by Julia Singh and weekly Music classes with the fabulous Diane Schaming. We also provide twice-a-month yoga classes with lovely Jennifer May. We are enjoying record enrollment, and we have expanded our afternoon program to include five days and doubled the number of afternoon school students. This has enabled more generous donations to GRCC from Pilgrim Preschool.

Pilgrim has made some needed changes to our infrastructure by adding keypad locks on our entrance doors and a fresh coat of paint at the end of the year. We could only have done this with the fantastic help of Doug Steele. Thank you!

The Pilgrim Preschool staff continues to value mutual support and respect for the Glen Ridge Congregational Church. Our goal is to continue to foster a strong partnership with GRCC. I want to thank those members of the Glen Ridge Congregational Church and staff who help us daily and have offered their kindness and support. Reverend Mansfield, Tyra Brown, John Dobbs, Doug Steele, Ann Bronneck, Pam Figlar, Alicia Harrison, Vernon Oliver, Octavio, Erika, and the entire Morales/Loayza family.

I want to thank our Pilgrim Board for their continued support and dedication. We could only do this with you. Thank you to Carol Harpster, Lorraine Brown, Marsha Watson, Paula Ely, Jill Csuka, Stephanie Haller, Cliona Stack, Ingrid Kozlowski, and Pastor Jeff for their willingness to share their time and wisdom.

Respectfully submitted by Karen Nisenson

MINISTRY OF ADMINISTRATION, PROPERTY, AND PERSONNEL

Overview

This ministry maintains and improves the buildings and grounds of the church and manages the Operating and Building Maintenance Fund monies in support of this. AP&P provides general management support for our administrative and maintenance staff plus our vendors. We manage rentals and support special events.

AP&P oversaw the completion of various projects that benefited the Church and its membership. Some of these projects are listed below. Additionally, 2023 saw the return of events to Robinson Hall and the rental of the kitchen and another available space. AP&P will continue to focus on rentals in 2024.

2023 Highlights

1. The Glen Ridge Congregational Church signs on the Ridgewood Avenue lawn and Church Tower were fully refurbished and painted. The new signs are welcoming, bright, adorned with the United Church of Christ logo, and built to last. AP&P sought advice from the Church Council on the design and we believe the signs came out beautifully.
2. Many of the windows on the Clark Street side of the Church were repaired and caulked. This project was approved due to evidence of leaking and visual signs of deferred maintenance. Also, the Clark Street entrance was fitted with a new security system that allows staff/vendors access to the building using a keypad and, more importantly, allows key staff to see and track who is entering the building. Additional security measures (keypad locks) were installed at the Pilgrim wing entrances as well.
3. Renter issues were also dealt with expediently, whether repairs to the roof or doors in the Pilgrim wing, pilot lights in the kitchen ovens being replaced, or leaking in other building areas used by renters. Additionally, the former Associate Pastor's office was renovated and is available for rental. These improvements should improve our ability to rent our unused/underutilized spaces.
4. The new Office Administrator, Alicia Harrison, has been an excellent addition to the staff and is learning the ropes of this position including contract and vendor management and Finance support.
5. Octavio Morales acts as a Lead Custodian at the Church. We have a staff of 1.5 FTE's. We insource the majority of landscape management and will be outsourcing snow removal this coming year.

Use of Funds

Our improvement projects are funded by the Building Maintenance Fund, which is in turn funded by our Endowment Fund. Special improvements requested by users of our space are generally funded by the requesting organization with our approval. Day-to-day operational support is funded by our Operating Fund, which comes largely from pledged contributions, rental revenue, and some fundraisers. We continue to balance providing services through employed staff and outsourced services as requirements demand. We are trying to insource services as much as possible so we can contain costs plus provide more steady employment for our staff.

Our Appreciation

AP&P thanks our staff and partners for all their support. Our Senior Custodian, Octavio Morales, Erika Loayza, and Vernon Oliver have shown consistent performance and flexibility in supporting us. Mary Jones continues to help after hours to make our accounts payable and reporting run smoothly in support of Pam Figlar and her very effective, tireless Finance Ministry. Iryna Carey continues to provide very responsive, expert legal support creating and maintaining our lease, rental agreements as a key member of our ministry. We work with many vendor partner organizations:

- Work Partners LLC – Flat roof repairs over Pilgrim Wing and other miscellaneous roofing issues.
- Salazar Brothers – Window repairs and caulking on Clark Street side of building.
- Franklin Lowe & Son Plumbing – Services boilers and responds to emergencies.
- Service Professionals – HVAC repair and servicing.
- Joseph Gomes – supports our information system maintenance; designed a security solution for the Clark Street entrance projected to be implemented in 2024.

These organizations/individuals can be counted on for quality and professionalism. More than this, they treat our Church as more than another building needing repair. They treat it as a special place, which it is.

Submitted by Doug Steele, Chairman
and John Solarino, Co-chairman of AP&P

MINISTRY OF ADULT EDUCATION

The Ministry of Adult Education continues to explore ways to meet the needs of the congregation in a post-COVID environment. Redirecting the Ministry in the face of unpredictable “in person” availability of both the Ministry members and especially the congregation has continued to be a challenge. We have suffered a lackluster response from the congregation in terms of willingness to involve themselves - many are stretched thin with other church involvement.

Palm Sunday, the Ministry led an informal palm-weaving class, teaching the Philippine traditional craft of Palaspas and fostering intercultural exchange.

A glass-blowing afternoon was scheduled for early April, however the organization was forced to cancel. We may reschedule in 2024.

Other plans pushed forward into 2024 include “field trips” to the Cloisters Museum and the Rubin Museum in New York City experiencing faith-based exhibitions, a congregational book-read, and various Second Hour speakers, the first topic being the origin of the Pride Flag as we continue to educate ourselves on LGBTQ topics.

The year continued with the completion of the Open and Affirming initiative. The Ministry of Adult Education co-sponsored the initiative with John Dobbs and Nikki Ramirez. After exploring what it means to become an Open and Affirming congregation, we took a congregational vote and the measure passed with unanimous support. This is a major event in the life of the church and one every member and every Ministry can celebrate.

We are optimistic that by diversifying our offerings in 2024 we can reinvigorate congregational involvement.

Respectfully submitted,
Holly Eastman
Co-Chair, Adult Education

WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

The Women's Association is an organization of service and fellowship composed of all the women of the Glen Ridge Congregational Church. The Association and its members have worked hard this year to continue to strengthen our church and contribute to the greater community.

Fundraising

We are best known for our two largest undertakings; the Rummage Sales and the Antiques Show. Both the Spring and the Fall sales (under the direction of Ann Bronneck, Linda Kerr and Phyllis Connolly) were successful, raising \$14,363.51. We served our community by providing a central location for neighbors to donate items no longer wanted and a resource for those in need to purchase essential items at modest cost while raising funds for our benevolences. All left over items were donated to Goodwill. Many thanks to all the volunteers who worked at the sale and the dedicated men, women and children who worked tirelessly to sort and set up the sale. A special thank you to Linda Pursley, a former member who came from Florida to help during the week of set-up and to work at the sale. Thank you also to the men of Integrity who helped with the set-up, take down and all the heavy lifting.

The 76th Annual Antiques Show, the longest running church sponsored show in Northern New Jersey (under the direction of Ann Bronneck - Show Manager, Debbie Turri – Dealer/Marketing Manager, Fran Wong – Treasurer, Holly Eastman and Dorothy Waldt – Show Book Advertising and Sponsorship, Marsha Watson and Nadine Pappas-Wilkes – Café Managers), was very successful despite frigid temperatures, raising \$13,000. I thank all the volunteers who came together to ensure success. We also express our gratitude to Pilgrim Preschool for vacating their classrooms for our use.

Benevolences

We dispersed a total of \$12,850 to outside charities this year. Similar to previous years, donations were made to OCWM, UCC Disaster Fund, Integrity House, Bloomfield Food Pantry, MEND, World Central Kitchen, Union Theological Seminary, Partners for Health (Mountainside Chaplaincy), Climate/Global Hope UCC and Glen Ridge Volunteer Ambulance Squad. New benevolences included Chris Daniels (Music), MESH, Eva's Village and Friends of the Howe House. In addition to money given to these charities, money was appropriated for the SCEEP Challenge Fund and Refugee Resettlement Program which will be spent in 2024.

We continued our involvement with Kiva. Kiva is an international non-profit, the mission of which is to alleviate poverty through small loans to grow or start a business, go to school or to access clean energy. As the loans are repaid, we reinvest in additional loans, focusing on women with businesses in disadvantaged areas. During the past year, we were able to make 17 new loans to women mostly in Central and South America. We also invested an additional \$250 which will allow us to make ten new \$25 loans. Please see the 2023 Kiva loan summary at the end of this report. Thank you to Fran Wong for the time and energy she spends researching the loans and her willingness to manage our involvement.

In addition to external benevolences, we supported the church by giving \$5,000 to GRCC. The Women's Association continues to pay 50% of the Sunday Sexton's salary, provide the coffee for Fellowship Hour and fund the weekly kitchen cleaning.

Please see the Women's Association Treasurer's Report for a complete list of benevolence disbursements and expenditures.

Fellowship/Service

We gather in fellowship to relax, share a meal and enjoy the company of one another. In June we had an end of the year dinner in the Blue Room. It was a fun evening filled with laughter, chatter and camaraderie.

In the past year we hosted memorial service receptions for Norma Batastini, Barbara Metro, Bart Brown and Nancy Bigelow. All were long time members of the church and two were past presidents of the Women's Association. I thank Linda Kerr, Phyllis Connolly and Amy Haggerty for their continued willingness to oversee and coordinate the receptions.

The Cards of Concern is an ongoing project spearheaded by Lynn Ritchkoff, Lynne Palmer and Amy Haggerty. A huge thank you to these 3 ladies for faithfully writing notes each and every week.

I am appreciative of all the support I have received from the women of the church and want to thank Linda Kerr and Phyllis Connolly for serving as Treasurer and Secretary (respectively) of the Women's Association.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Bronneck

WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION TREASURER'S REPORT

BALANCE ON HAND - JANUARY 1, 2023 \$18,973.89

RECEIPTS:

Rummage	\$18,047.00
Antiques Show	\$13,000.00
Receptions	<u>\$ 220.00</u>
Total Receipts	<u>\$31,267.00</u>

DISBURSEMENTS

In-Church Benevolences	\$ 5,000.00
Benevolences	\$12,850.00
Projects-Congregational Care	\$ 286.47
Special Gifts to Staff	\$ 700.00
Sunday Sexton & Kitchen Cleaning	\$ 4,892.98
Rummage	\$ 3,683.49
Receptions	\$ 482.94
Coffee Hour	\$ 134.99
Refugees	\$ 500.00
Miscellaneous	\$ 180.40
Total Disbursements	<u>\$28,711.27</u>

BALANCE ON HAND - DECEMBER 31, 2023 \$21,529.62

Respectfully submitted,

Linda R. Kerr
Treasurer

2023 WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION BENEVOLENCES

OCWM	\$ 1,000.00
UCC Disaster Fund	\$ 1,000.00
World Central Kitchen	\$ 1,000.00
MEND	\$ 1,000.00
SCEEP Challenge	\$ 1,000.00
Integrity House	\$ 2,000.00
Bloomfield Food Pantry (MEND)	\$ 2,000.00
GR Ambulance Squad	\$ 500.00
Montclair Emergency Services for Hope	\$ 500.00
Union Theological Seminary	\$ 100.00
Climate Hope/Global Hope (UCC)	\$ 1,000.00
Partners for Health (Mountainside Chaplains)	\$ 250.00
KIVA loans	\$ 250.00
J. Howe House	\$ 500.00
Chris Daniels, Music for Children	\$ 250.00
Eva's Kitchen	\$ 500.00

Total \$12,850.00

IN-CHURCH BENEVOLENCES \$ 5,000.00

TOTAL BENEVOLENCES \$17,850.00

WORSHIP MINISTRY ANNUAL REPORT

This year, Worship Ministry has strived to support GRCC and Pastor Jeff and Minister of Music, Tom Mustachio as we continue to build back post-pandemic. It has been wonderful to see new people joining our worship service each week, and we hope to continue to support all aspects of congregational worship.

Pastor Jeff Mansfield and Minister of Music, Tom Mustachio, bring energy and connection to the worship service through stories, music, poetry and scripture. We all benefit from the vision these two have for the Sunday service. However, worship is not just a noun, it is also a verb. We benefit greatly from the many volunteers who support our service each Sunday. Many thanks to David Dik, John Dobbs and Jerry Melichar for their assistance with changing the banners each liturgical season. Our lay leading team does a wonderful job presenting scripture and inviting us into times of reflection each week. And our ushers are steadfast in their commitment to fill this role each month so that we can share our treasures with the church.

As Advent began this past December, Pastor Jeff came down with an illness very late Saturday night. This led to a flurry of texts and last-minute changes and preparations. What followed was a worship service in which everyone had an opportunity to share special traditions with each other. Many of you have commented on how wonderful it felt to be part of the service in an active way. It was a wonderful connection that was shared.

As we look ahead to next year, the Worship Ministry hopes that you remember that feeling of connection and participation. While we hope to have more opportunities for sharing, we also invite you to consider expanding your participation in the worship service. Our usher team is wonderful, but they could use some additional support. Please let us know if you might be interested in joining an usher team once a month. We would love to hear your ideas of other ways to support our congregation's worship experience. Here's to 2024!

Respectfully submitted,

Nikki Ramirez and Wynne Zalewski,
Worship Ministry Co-Chairs

MUSIC COMMITTEE

A subcommittee of the Ministry of Worship, the Music Committee was created in 1983 to serve as a sounding board for the Minister of Music, to provide liaison between the congregation and the music program, and to receive input from other staff members and the congregation on matters involving the music program. Over the years, the work of the Committee has evolved to support and facilitate various aspects of our music program. (See Minister of Music Report)

Most of our concerts are presented under the auspices of the Glen Ridge Community Concerts Series, now in its thirty second season. We offer members of the community at large the opportunity to participate in concerts given by the Glen Ridge Choral Society, which is composed of the Chancel Choir plus other interested singers. The group typically numbers approximately 40+, with 20 Chancel Choir members, and 20+ members from the community and congregation.

As always, the efforts of our exceptional Minister of Music, Tom Mustachio, continue to guide us through these challenging times. Tom, thank you for all your contributions to the ministry of the Glen Ridge Congregational Church.

The Glen Ridge Community Concerts outreach program is self-supporting. The financial sponsorship by church and community members continues to provide essential financial support for the concert series. 2022 concerts presented:

- March 19 – Duo Scorpio, harp concert. Had to be postponed due to artist’s scheduling conflict. Rescheduled for October.
- May 21 – Spring Concert - *A Disney Spectacular* A celebration of all thing Disney including songs from Aladdin, Beauty and the Beast, The Lion King, Frozen and many others. Featuring the Glen Ridge Choral Society and Chamber Orchestra, children’s choir and handbells.
- October 1 – Duo Scorpio, harp concert in the blue room.
- December 10 – *Welcome Christmas!* – The traditional annual Holiday Concert and Carol Sing.

Other musical events for which the Music Committee provided assistance:

- February 21 – Mardi Gras Pancake Supper. New in 2023, order pickup and limited delivery.
- October 29 – All Saints’ Sunday – Requiem, Maurice Duruflé
- Community Holiday Sing-along –This event was previously a jointly sponsored program between the Women’s Club of Glen Ridge and GRCC. GRCC did not participate this year.

Organ

Our beloved organ began having mechanical issues again in April which were irreparable with a short-term fix. A project budget of \$190,000 was developed to ensure the smooth operation of the organ for this generation and the next. Bart Brown’s gracious 2:3 match of funds raised and a \$40,000 GRCC Endowment gift made our public phase possible. On June 1st, the GRCC Music Committee launched a campaign to raise the final \$20,000 needed. The generosity of the church family-at-large has been extraordinary. Donations totaling \$49,815.43 have been received from 78 contributors to date.

Partnering with the Peragallo Organ Company, a four-generation organ builder based in Paterson, New Jersey, the project included replacing all the organ contacts with digital circuitry and added MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) technology. The console appointments were all replaced or refurbished to work with the new digital operating system.

Additional donated funds allowed for some organ upgrades including repair and cleaning of some elderly pipe work and some digital upgrades providing solo organ stops to be played on any of the organ’s three keyboards. The organ console was removed from the sanctuary in August and a temporary organ was used until early December when the refurbishments were completed just in time for Christmas Eve.

In addition, funds donated by Bart Brown were used to purchase an 1888 Steinway Model B (6’11’) piano owned by the family of Rev. Katrina Forman at Union Congregational Church in Montclair. Rev Forman’s parents were looking for a UCC home for the piano that would respect and appreciate its beauty. That piano is now in our Sanctuary, and the former Mason and Hamlin piano from the Sanctuary has been relocated to Robinson Hall.

The Concert Fund receipts and disbursements for the calendar year 2023 are:

Concert Fund Balance – December 31, 2022	\$24,156
Concert receipts and subscriptions	\$ 8,795
Sponsorships by members and friends	14,315
Other receipts	<u>480</u>
Total receipts in 2023	<u>\$23,590</u>
Payments to musicians & engineers	\$ 12,484
Printing, mailing, advertising, signs	2,624
Music scores & rehearsal tracks	1,675
Other (equipment, ASCAP fees, receptions, etc.)	<u>1,841</u>
Total disbursements in 2023	<u>\$18,624</u>
Concert Fund Balance – December 31, 2023	\$29,122

In 2023, the Committee included the following members in addition to the chair: David, Dik (co-chair), Tom Mustachio (ex-officio), and Jill Simmons (co-chair). My sincere thanks to the Music Committee members and to all the others in the congregation and community who support the music program in various ways.

Bart Brown was not with us to hear the result of the organ refurbishment – a project that embodied his passion for the Church and its ministry of music. A founding member of the GRCC Music Committee, we dedicate this report to his efforts over the past three decades to shape the music ministry to the program it has become.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Brandell, Co-Chair

MINISTRY OF PARISH LIFE

Members are responsible for the fellowship and service functions of the church. They oversee publicity and public relations efforts (newsletter, directory, and seasonal brochures) and coordinate other activities of the various groups concerned with caring for the congregation. The Marketing Committee is part of Parish Life.

Accomplishments

1. Presented the annual high school scholarships in June to Elaine Gantuah and Jordan Richardson.
2. Organized and monitored Sign-Up Genius (grocery shopping) for members needing assistance.
3. Provided the Welcome Back Picnic in September.
4. Provided a St. Patrick's Day Family Event in March. It was a successful event that attracted Church families as well as families from the wider community.
5. Our Marketing Committee has been busy handling social media posts for the church and various ministries as well as church website updates and revisions.

Future Goals

1. Continue to find fun and creative ways to expand our outreach into the wider community.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Augis,
Ministry of Parish Life Chair

PARISH CLERK'S ANNUAL REPORT

TOTAL ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP AS OF JANUARY 1, 2023 **439**

Admitted during 2023 by:

Confession of Faith	4
Confirmation	0

Lost during 2023 by:

Death	6
Transfer or Resign Membership	0
Put on Inactive List	0

TOTAL ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP AS OF JANUARY 1, 2024 **437**

CEREMONIES

Rev. Jeff Mansfield officiated at:

Baptisms	11
Funerals/Memorials	8
Interments	6
Weddings	0

DEATHS OF MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH

July	June Bourne	October	H. Bartlett Brown
August	Gertrude Budelman	November	Carolyn Ferguson
	Barbara Metro		Nancy Bigelow

NEW MEMBERS

March 12, 2023	Mollie and Ian Gilmore
	Fara and Matthew Saathoff

CONFIRMANDS

There were no confirmands in 2023.

CONGRATULATIONS TO MEMBERS

Our Senior Members by Age

<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>
Sylvia Caldwell, born in 1927	Tatsuo Honma, born in 1932

Our Longest-Term Member(s)

Joan Hayes, member for 75 years (Confirmation Class of 1949)
Barbara Stevens, member for 74 years (Confirmation Class of 1949)

50-Year Members

David Kerr
Linda Kerr

MINISTRY OF OUTREACH AND MISSION

The Ministry of Outreach and Mission serves to coordinate the collection and direction of donated goods and monies towards reputable and charitable organizations / individuals.

This past year was one of significant need, both near and far. Locally, we continued to coordinate the collection of food each week for the Bloomfield Presbyterian Church on the Green's Food Pantry, which has experienced astronomical growth in the number of patrons it serves since the COVID pandemic – numbers which have not gone down since. We also continued to fund the Minister's Discretionary Fund, which is used by Pastor Jeff to provide monetary assistance to those who seek the Church's assistance with dire financial needs. \$1,000 of these funds was donated to Heather Wallace, a local resident whose ongoing medical struggles leaves her unable to work enough to pay for her basic needs. The Congregation donated an additional \$901 to her through the Church in January 2024.

Locally, the Ministry also coordinated the distribution of Christmas gifts purchased by the Church's members and friends to several families from St. James Social Services in Newark, NJ. These families needed help providing Christmas cheer to their children due to fires, deaths, job loss and other circumstances which left them unable to afford these "extras". The Ministry is incredibly grateful for all the elves in our Congregation, as well as Pilgrim Preschool, that participated in this mission. In addition to the gifts provided, the Ministry also purchased \$1,250 in ShopRite gift cards to ensure that these families did not go hungry during the holidays.

International assistance was provided by the Ministry in February, when a massive earthquake struck Turkey and Syria. The Ministry supported a fundraiser organized by community members and held at our Church, contributing \$2,000 to the USA for UNHCR fund to assist with the significant humanitarian needs resulting from the earthquake. And at year-end, the Ministry directed half of the Christmas Eve offering to Doctors Without Borders – an organization providing significant medical aid and expertise to victims of the Israeli Gaza War.

The Ministry continues to contribute significant funds to the UCC's Our Church's Wider Mission, which uses these funds, collected from UCC churches throughout the country, to support local church missions as well as international mission work.

Organizations slated to receive donations from the Ministry with budgeted 2023 monies include Meals on Wheels, World Central Kitchen, and CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) of Essex County, which advocates for children in the foster care system.

We would like to thank everyone who served on this Ministry and/or assisted with the Ministry's work this year.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia Harrison and Susan Hughes,
Ministry of Outreach and Mission Co-Chairs

2023 STEWARDSHIP REPORT FOR THE GRCC ANNUAL MEETING

This Stewardship Season was one of trying new things!

Our theme for the 2024 Campaign was “**Because of YOU Our Church Changes Lives**” which speaks to the heart of our Church story and what makes GRCC exceptional in today’s world.

A few new things you might have noticed this year....

- For the first time, we used United Church of Christ materials as the foundation for our campaign and highlighted the role the wider UCC plays in leveraging our gifts to change more lives. Read more here: <https://www.ucc.org/what-we-do/>
- Stewardship spoke honestly about the real cost of running the church and set an ambitious, dream big goal of \$450,000 for 2024. Many thanks to the givers who “seeded the pot” for this effort putting us 1/3 of the way there at kickoff! While we haven’t quite met the goal, it’s hard to hit a target without one so why not aim high?
- We stepped up the promotional efforts with 2 letters – one by mail from Stewardship and one via email from Pastor Jeff, posters, stickers, a lawn banner, a bulletin cover and insert, newsletter and social media posts, etc. Open to suggestions for next year!
- A festive “Good News” Sunday with cake and balloons to celebrate the results.

Consecration Sunday was on November 13th last year and pledges received as of that date were blessed during the service. As of this late January writing, we have received 80 pledges totaling \$308,332. Combined with our recurring givers who regularly give but do not pledge, our **Total Giving** would approach \$330,000! We are hopeful that number, along with other giving and additional pledges, will bring us to the number shown in the 2024 budget.

Over the past year, a number of pledgers have sadly moved or passed on so we haven’t matched last year *yet*, but almost **40%** of recurring pledgers increased their pledge by an inflation-busting **10%** or more, and almost **30%** increased their pledge by at least **20%**! We have also received 4 new pledges to date. We are grateful for the time, talent, and treasure that everyone puts forth to keep our church family moving forward. Stewardship isn’t a few weeks a year, but a state of mind!

Lastly, we would personally like to thank Pastor Jeff, Pam Figlar, Carol Harpster, Tom Mustachio, Alicia Harrison and others who helped with this year’s campaign. It takes a village of Stewards!

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca and Dave Mitchell
Co-Chairs, Ministry of Stewardship

Pledging still on your to-do list or thinking about increasing your pledge? **SCAN HERE!** =====>



NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Members and friends of the Glen Ridge Congregational Church,

What is it about this Church that is important to you?

- Is it the beauty and peace of the sanctuary during services?
- Is it the transcendent music of the choirs?
- Is it the programs that engage, entertain, and educate our children?
- Is it our outreach to those who hunger, who struggle with addiction, who suffer and are in need?

Whatever it is that brought you here, it is due to the vision and work of your fellow members and friends who bring their interests, their knowledge and skill, their time, their talent, and their love to do all that makes this Church a special place. As part of worship each Sunday in January, a person like you has witnessed to the congregation about how they, and those who work with them, engage in the work of the Church, describing what they do and what you could do to support and maintain this community of which you are a valued part.

Service to the Church and your fellow members need not take much time. If you are handy and know a little about carpentry, plumbing, electrical work, you might find it rewarding to work with the Ministry of Administration, Properties and Personnel (AP&P) in evaluating the condition of the Church property and the Parsonage and helping to maintain and protect them.

If you wonder about or are interested in the role Christianity and this Church can play in the modern world or you want to know more about how our faith came to be and to grow, you might help the Ministry of Adult Education prepare programs in areas connected with the relation of the Church to the community and to society at large.

If you love being around and working with children and teenagers you might help the Ministry of Children and Youth, not just by teaching Sunday School but by helping with family workshops, summer programs, and outings.

Whatever your talent we can find a way for you to use it in a way that is fulfilling for you, will bring you even closer to the Church and its members and will continue to make this place a special space for all.

If you wish to participate in a ministry, volunteer to help with an event, or have any questions about what you can do, please contact a ministry directly or contact a member of the Nominating Committee.

Respectively submitted by the Nominating Committee

John Dobbs, Chair
Lynne Palmer
Marsha Watson

GARDEN OF MEMORY COMMITTEE

The Garden of Memory Committee was established in 1970 to operate and maintain the Garden of Memory on the south lawn of the church property. The flagstone patio is the repository for the ashes of church members and their families. The names of those interred are inscribed on plaques which are mounted on two boards in the narthex of the sanctuary. The flagstone patio in the Garden has 134 stones each of which covers a space. In each space there are 4 sections for a total of 536 sections. Each section holds 2 urns for a total capacity of 1072 urns. There are 316 persons interred. There are 54 spaces fully available, providing 216 sections capable of holding 532 urns. In addition, there are several spaces which are partially occupied or reserved. Over the past 20 years, the Garden of Memory has sold an average of 4 spaces per year, but the last six years have seen a downturn in sales. In 2018, 2 spaces were sold. In 2019 1 space was sold and no spaces were sold in 2020, 2021, 2022, or 2023.

The Garden of Memory Committee attempts to make the Garden a peaceful, attractive, and dignified part of the church grounds that compliments the total appearance of our facility while providing an inexpensive alternative to traditional burials. The price of a section, which will accommodate two urns, is \$400. At the time of an interment there is an administrative fee of \$175 which covers the costs of the urn, plaque, and the opening and closing of the section. Since its inception, the Garden of Memory has been entirely self-supporting.

There were interments in the Garden of Memory in 2023:

Bart Brown

Robert Brown

Barry Yocum

Barbara Piggery

Nancy Bigelow

Carolyn Ferguson will be interred sometime in the spring of 2024

The current members of the committee are Susan Hughes, Susan Krien, Jeff Mansfield, Audrey Wood, Craig Wood, and Jim Watson. Additional help with the Garden is provided by Peter Hughes.

FINANCE REPORT

As of December 31, 2023, the Garden of Memory had total assets of \$50,608.96, consisting of \$48,036.96 in a Vanguard account and \$2,572 in the Garden of Memory Fund.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Watson, Chair

GLEN RIDGE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH ENDOWMENT FUND 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

The Endowment Fund (EF) of the Glen Ridge Congregational Church was established in 1984 with the goal of generating income to support the maintenance, repairs and capital needs of our Church. The Trustees are pleased to report that the EF continues to support the Church well, with flexibility in meeting its capital needs. The following are highlights for 2023:

- \$75,000 of contributions in 2023 to the Building Maintenance Fund (BMF).
- \$40,000 special contribution to the organ refurbishment project.
- Total contributions to the BMF of \$475,000 for 2020-2023, including \$100,000 in special contributions for the ADA project.
- EF balance of \$2,194,324 (net of contributions and fees) at year-end 2023 - an 8.6% increase from year-end 2022, reflecting a substantial market recovery, particularly towards year-end, and also the impact of distributions.
- \$75,000 in contribution commitment for 2024, to be paid in three installments through the year.
- Continued use of EF contributions on a temporary basis to help cover the Church's rising insurance premium.

2023 Portfolio Profile

The EF Trustees and our investment manager, Neuberger Berman (NB), are committed to Investment Policy guidelines established in 2001. These include a portfolio weighting of 65% equities and 35% cash and fixed income products, based on the tendency of bond markets to move contrary to and help offset expected equity market volatility. Furthermore, equity investments are diversified and in large, liquid, U.S.-based public companies and funds with a market capitalization of over \$500 million. Fixed income investments are restricted to investment grade securities rated no lower than "A". Since 2022, a portion of funds have been reinvested into diversified equity and fixed income funds that have a long track record and are designed for institutional investors.

As of 12/31/2023, the EF was invested approximately 62% in equities, 36% in fixed income and 2% in cash. While capital appreciation in sectors such as High Tech has tended to increase equity concentration, we have worked to re-balance the portfolio in line with our long-term guidelines, taking advantage of the impact of rising interest rates on fixed income investments after a dismal market performance in 2022. We believe the equities/fixed income balance is appropriate given the EF's long-term investment perspective and the advantages of a diversified portfolio in reducing volatility.

2023 Fund Performance

2023 showed hopeful improvements in the stock and bond markets and in our portfolio, on the heels of a dismal 2022, when our fund balances declined almost 20%. After distributions, EF balances grew 8.6% in 2023 and the overall ROR of the portfolio was 13.1% (net of fees) vs. 26.3% for the S&P 500. Particularly in the fourth quarter, the equity markets responded to moderating inflation, robust corporate earnings and consumer spending, resilient labor reports, and prospects that the Fed might begin to reduce interest rates in 2024 and pull off a "soft landing" for the economy.

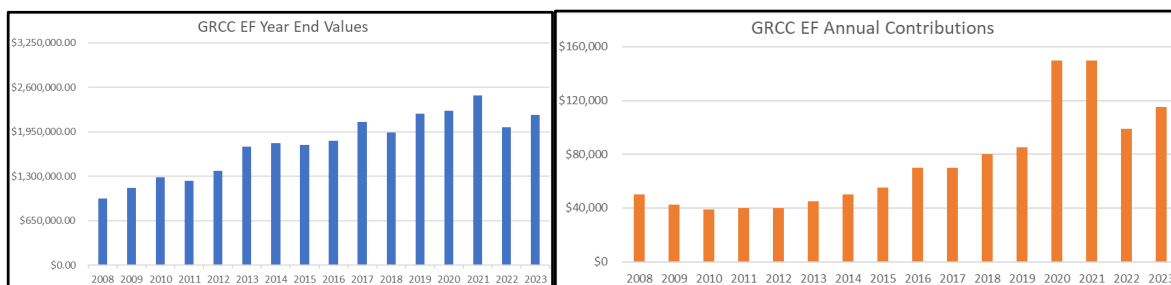
While the market outlook for 2024 remains hopeful, it is early to judge the durability of declining inflation and the Fed’s response with possible rate cuts. U.S. elections and international conflicts also present a lot of uncertainty. We continue to believe that a conservative portfolio balance serves the EF and GRCC well. In 2023, NB shifted reinvestment away from equities and more into shorter-term risk-averse corporate and government bonds, which are providing substantially higher yields in the area of 5%. This strategy also helps us maintain liquidity for distributions and the flexibility to respond to GRCC’s needs including, for example, to support the organ refurbishment opportunity that arose fairly quickly in 2023.

Since we engaged NB as investment manager in 2001, the total portfolio has generated an annualized return (net of fees) of 6.65% versus the S&P return of 9.18%. Over that period, our equity portfolio outperformed the S&P (10.22% vs. 9.18%), while fixed income underperformed the Bloomberg Index (2.94% vs 3.25%). We continue to view bond market exposure as essential to mitigate equity market risk and volatility, and for longer-term preservation of the EF corpus. While overall returns are still very acceptable, the Trustees continually evaluate our asset allocation and NB’s performance to preserve and, where possible, increase returns appropriately.

Fund Balance and Distributions

As of 12/31/2023, the value of the EF was \$2,194,324, an 8.6% increase over year-end 2022. The main driver was a \$265,124 increase in market value. This ending balance is net of the EF’s 2023 regular distribution of \$75,000 and \$20,000 of our \$40,000 total commitment to the organ refurbishment, as well as associated fund fees, taxes and charges.

These charts provide details regarding the EF’s growth and contributions to the Church since 2005. Since inception, the EF has contributed a cumulative \$1,396,615 to the Church, with \$1,050,000 since 2010, including special contributions for the ADA project and the organ refurbishment. This record underlines the importance of conservative investment and distribution strategies to maintain a strong and growing endowment.



Historically, the EF Trustees have targeted a contribution payout range of 3%-4% of the EF’s Net Asset Value (NAV), with annual payouts generally in the area of 3.5%, allowing for flexibility while preserving the corpus. Our distributions of \$75,000 in 2023 and the same commitment for 2024 each equal about 3.4% of NAV.

We are well beyond the original EF “distribution threshold” established in the by-laws but remain committed to the tenet, which prohibits distributions that would take the EF below a minimum balance of \$1,000,000 plus all additional gifts received beyond that level. The intent is for the Endowment to

only distribute income and gains, leaving the principal intact for the Church's long-term financial strength.

Gifts and bequests are very important to the growth of the EF and have frequently been given as memorials. The Trustees appreciate these donations and ask the congregation to keep the Endowment in mind when making your short- and longer-term giving plans.

Rising Insurance Burden

Since 2022, the Trustees have agreed to provide EF contributions, under the direction of AP&P, to defray the Church's property insurance premiums. Traditionally, insurance premiums have been treated as operating costs outside the scope of the EF. We agreed to continue this support in 2024, with GRCC's annual insurance premium again up almost 8% to \$78,713, a level that has more than doubled since 2017. This onerous trend reflects industry-wide claims, not GRCC claims experience. We have continued to stipulate that up to a maximum 75% of the premium would be eligible for support (\$58,272 in 2024), approximating the portion of the premium related to brick and mortar.

We view this as a temporary accommodation subject to annual review in conjunction with AP&P, taking into account premium trends and the Church's changing financial position and operating budget. In reality, however, there are no near-term prospects for this premium to decline. This use of EF contributions effectively comes from normal distributions, with approximately \$166,000 diverted from capital projects to insurance through 2024. While urgent capital needs have abated since the completion of the ADA project, this diversion, if sustained, could hurt the Church's ability to meet future capital needs.

In closing, I would like to thank Peter Waldt, Dennis Krien, Peter Hughes and Marcia O'Grady for their work to support the EF mission, their investment acuity and their dedication to the Church's continued financial health and broader spiritual and community goals.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Coleman

Thomas S. Coleman
Endowment Chair (2021-2025)

ENDOWMENT FUND TRUSTEES:

Peter Waldt (Term ending 2024)
Dennis Krien (2026)
Peter Hughes (2027)
Marcia O'Grady (2028)

MINISTRY OF FINANCE

The Ministry of Finance is responsible for the financial operation of the Church to enable its ministry and mission. Responsibilities of the Finance Ministry include (1) overseeing the collection of all receipts and payment of all expenses, (2) managing the Church’s investments that are not part of the Endowment Fund, (3) keeping detailed financial records, (4) preparing monthly financial reports, (5) issuing quarterly contribution statements, and (6) preparing annual budgets.

Financial Highlights of 2023

2023 ended on a high note financially. We had a surplus in the Operating Fund budget, the first in many years! And, we had a very successful Organ Refurbishment fund drive. Our newly refurbished organ made its debut on Christmas Eve.

The highlights of the 2023 finances are further discussed in the Operating Fund section below. (Please see the Treasurer’s Report on the pages immediately following this report for more details about the 2023 finances.)

- **Operating Fund**

Here is a summary of the actual Operating Fund activity for 2023 compared to the 2023 budget.

Operating Fund		
Summary of 2023 Receipts and Disbursements		
	2023 Actual	Annual Budget
Receipts		
2023 Pledges and Other Support from the Congregation	\$373,054	\$362,000
Arrears from 2022	\$40,531	35,500
Year-end and Deficit Reduction Contributions	\$14,791	\$8,000
Other Giving (Offerings and Special Gifts)	\$10,017	\$6,000
Other Income before Investment Earnings (Building Use Fees and Pilgrim Contribution)	\$105,362	\$70,150
Net Investment Income	\$5,748	\$5,000
Total Receipts	\$549,503	\$486,650
Expenses	\$538,306	\$542,750
Net Excess (Deficit)	\$11,197	(\$56,100)

Receipts: The positive results for the Operating Fund were due primarily to these two occurrences:

1. Receipts for the year were above budget by \$62,853.
 - We had a very good month of December with pledgers catching up on their pledge commitments and generous year-end contributions from members, the Women’s Association and Pilgrim Preschool. Thanks to all the generous individuals and families!

(However, even though Pledge Payments and Other Support from the congregation exceeded budget by about \$11,000, there were still \$19,700 in unpaid pledges.)

- Rental income from our new tenant, Mezoco, began in February 2023 and, because it was not reflected in the 2023 budget, shows up as surplus income.
2. The large arrears payments on behalf of members who died in 2022 and whose heirs honored their 2022 pledges in 2023 to the tune of \$30,000, a significant contributor our positive outcome.

Expenses were actually below budget by around \$4,400, even after the return of \$5,000 of unused Children & Youth offset to the designated fund at the end of the year, which increased the expenses and decreased the surplus by that \$5,000. Thanks to all who carefully managed expenses.

Operating Fund Balance: The financial markets performed well in 2023, closing up about 24% for the year. As a result, our Operating Fund benefited from a realized gain of \$78,855, so its balance to start 2024 is \$153,709. Our goal is to maintain the Operating Fund balance above \$100,000 to serve as our reserves to cover our deficit and to be our rainy-day fund to provide money for emergency needs.

- **Building Maintenance Fund**

The Building Maintenance Fund (BMF) received \$75,000 from the Endowment Fund in 2023. The Ministry of AP&P took great care in managing the expenses, spending \$55,109 in 2023 making sure needed repairs and upgrades were made to the buildings.

The Endowment Fund Trustees agreed that up to 75% of the property/liability insurance premium, for 2023 could be paid from the Building Maintenance Fund to cover all or most of the property insurance portion. The actual amount paid from the BMF was \$54,662, This payment did not come out of the BMF annual budget, but instead from the BMF reserves. The actual 2023 insurance premium was \$72,882; the remaining \$18,221 was paid from the Operating Fund.

Budgets for the Year 2024

Although we came through 2023 in better shape financially than we expected, 2024 will be a challenge as we will not have the arrears cushion that we had in 2023. And, we are continuing to experience a decline in pledge support, primarily due to generous pledgers moving away or passing on.

The full proposed 2024 Operating Fund and Building Maintenance Fund budgets are presented on the last four pages at the back of this Annual Report, as well as a Narrative of the Proposed 2024 Budget immediately preceding the full budgets Here are the highlights:

- **Operating Fund Budget**

Finance continues to wrestle with the issues of increased expenses and income expectations that fall below what is needed to run the operations of the Church. In addition, we need to provide funding for existing and new programs that are necessary to continue working toward our goal of growing the Church and increasing our outreach to the community. In the end there were four major events that influenced this proposed budget.

1. **Decreased Pledges.** Expected pledge support for 2024 is \$20,000 lower than 2023.
2. **Pilgrim is doing well!** Now that the pre-school and pre-K situation in the local communities has settled down after the COVID pandemic, Pilgrim is doing very well, with more afternoon programs, and waiting lists for most of their age groups. Therefore, Pilgrim will be increasing their budgeted contribution to the Church for 2024 by \$12,000 over 2023.
3. **Increased use of our building is generating more income.** With our new tenant, Mezoco coming on board last year, and increased use of our building for individual events, our budget for building usage is double what it was last year.
4. **The Endowment Trustees came through again!** Insurance costs are continuing to rise (due to all the natural disasters that have been occurring over the past few years) and have become a burden on the Operating Fund budget. For 2024, there was another 8% increase in the property/liability premium on top of the 10% increase in 2023. These may not seem to be huge increases, but on top of the 26% and 19% increases in the prior two years, the cumulative effect is to make the premiums extremely high. Once again, the Endowment Fund Trustees have agreed to allow the portion of the insurance premium attributable to the property, or \$58,272 of the total \$78,713 premium, to be paid from the Building Maintenance Fund (BMF) thus removing this expense from the Operating Fund budget. There is adequate money in the BMF to cover this expense without jeopardizing the funding for needed building repairs and upgrades. The Trustees, along with input from AP&P, will review this agreement every year as needed.

Receipts: This past year we continued to lose significant pledgers due to their moving away or passing on. This resulted in another \$20,000 decrease in estimated pledge income for 2024. This is a continuation of the trend of steadily decreasing pledge income we have been experiencing year over year.

For the 2024 Operating Fund Budget, receipts totaling \$488,700 are based on \$342,000 in pledges and other support from the congregation plus \$146,700 from other sources such as arrears, offertory, investment income, Pilgrim Preschool, St. Francis of Assisi, Mezoco, Glen Ridge Historical Society and other building usage. This is an increase in other source income of about \$22,000, giving us a net increase in receipts over last year of \$2,050.

Disbursements: The 2024 Operating Fund Budget disbursements of \$561,600 is a \$18,850 net increase from the 2023 Budget. Some expenses went up and some went down. Here are the major changes in budgeted expenses:

- The \$7,965 increase in the budget for professional staff includes modest pay raises and increased medical/dental benefit rates described below.
 - A 4% increase in salary is included for Pastor Jeff Mansfield and Tom Mustachio for their continued guidance. And, a 2% increase is included for our new professional staff member, Tyra Brown, who has taken on her new role with much enthusiasm and dedication.
 - Medical benefit premiums increased 3% and dental benefit premiums increased 4%.

- We budgeted a full year's pay for a new Youth Ministries Coordinator to run Sr. High and Jr. High Youth groups and outreach to young people and their families. Five local churches, including GRCC, will share the cost of this position. The annual pay plus FICA for this new position will be \$29,106. The GRCC Operating Fund will pay \$5,000 of this expense, thus no increase from last year's budget for this payroll item. The remaining \$24,106 will be paid from the new Youth Ministries Fund that will hold contributions from the partner churches.
- The \$5,368 increase in the budget for administrative staff includes:
 - A 2% increase for our new Office Administrator, Alicia Harrison, who has exhibited exceptional competence and enthusiasm in her new position.
 - Increased hours for the Sextons as more projects and events are occurring at the Church.
- Careful budgeting and expense monitoring by AP&P resulted in virtually no increase in total Administrative and Maintenance expenses for 2024. Some expenses went up and some went down, but the net effect was negligible.
- The other primary component of our expense increase is a modest increase of \$5,475 in the amount the ministries will have to spend.
 - Most of that increase is due to the addition of \$5,000 that GRCC will pay into the Youth Ministries Fund toward the non-payroll expenses of the Youth Ministries program. (GRCC will pay a total of \$10,000 toward the Youth Ministries program; \$5,000 is reflected in the Youth Ministries Coordinator's payroll and \$5,000 is a contribution to the Youth Ministries Fund to be used for other non-payroll expenses.)
 - The MOM budget was again held to \$28,000 for 2024. At the end of 2023, there was a balance of \$7,872 in the Local Benevolences Fund, which represents unspent MOM budget allocations from last year. Although this amount cannot be moved into the budget, it is available to be spent. In fact, \$1,000 has already been committed. Therefore, MOM will have the budget amount of \$28,000 plus the remaining Local Benevolences Fund amount of \$6,782 to spend, totaling \$34,782, which is in the neighborhood of the amount they had to spend at the beginning of 2023.

Deficit: The Proposed 2024 Operating Fund Budget shows a deficit of \$72,900 for the year.

Operating Fund Balance: As we have relied on the Operating Fund reserves to cover operating deficits, we made sure the deficit in the proposed budget would be covered by the \$153,709 Operating Fund.

- **Building Maintenance Fund Budget**

The proposed 2024 Building Maintenance Fund Budget reflects total receipts of \$75,000 derived solely from the contribution the Endowment Fund has agreed to make, which is equal to the amount they gave for 2023. Thanks to the Endowment Fund Trustees for their generous contribution.

The Bottom Line

We expect 2024 to be another challenging year financially. We hope to move toward growing our income with the goal of achieving a balanced budget as the Church continues to rebuild. This budget is heavy on realism with some degree of hopeful optimism. We hope that at the end of 2024 we will come in even better than we did in 2023 (we are a church, after all – we have faith!)

Operating Fund Reserves: We were fortunate that our Operating Fund reserves (our rainy-day funds used to cover cash shortfalls) ended 2023 with a healthy balance. We must continue to grow our income and/or spend wisely in the future so as not to exhaust our reserves.

What you can do to help: Each of us has the ability to help improve the Church’s situation in some way. For those of us who can, fulfilling our pledges to the Church is a good start. If you haven’t yet made a pledge for 2024, please do so. Or, if you have made a pledge, consider increasing it if you can. (A QR code linking directly to our online pledge form can be found in the Stewardship Report in this Annual Report.) Sign up for recurring electronic pledge payments through your bank or Tithely to help the Church better anticipate and control cash flow. Lastly, and most importantly, help spread the word of the Church’s good works and mission throughout the community. Invite friends and family to join us for Sunday worship and other events.

Thanks

Many people deserve thanks for their active participation in the effort it takes to manage the finances of the Church. In particular, much appreciation goes to our dedicated committee members, whether elected members, volunteer members or ex officio members:

Mike Brandell (Treasurer)	Jerry Melichar	Linda Seyffarth
Tom Coleman (Endowment)	Dave Mitchell (Stewardship)	Doug Steele (AP&P)
Gordon Hunziker	Rebecca Mitchell (Stewardship)	Craig Wood
Dennis Krien	Alden Provost	

We will all greatly miss our dear friend Bart Brown, who was a long-standing active member of the Finance Ministry (both elected and volunteer), as well as serving as Finance Chair and Treasurer at different times during his long tenure. We valued his perspective and insights and we will miss him terribly.

Extra thanks to Craig and Dennis for the many hours they devote to our bookkeeping, accounting and reporting requirements, Chris Ely for handling payroll responsibilities and Mary Jones for her invaluable support.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela A. Figlar,
Interim Finance Chair

NARRATIVE OF PROPOSED 2024 BUDGET

This narrative budget is intended to explain the proposed 2024 budget in terms that can be more easily understood by those of us who are not financial professionals. It provides a brief description of the expenditures needed to support the ministry and mission of the Church in the coming year, as well as showing the sources of the revenue to support those expenditures. The explanation combines the proposed Operating Fund budget and the Building Maintenance Fund budget. More details are shown on the budget pages.

Note that the proposed budget does not include the special funds, such as the Flower Fund, because their receipts and payments are generally independent from the Operating Fund budget.

Summary of Changes to the Operating Fund Budget for 2024

We closed 2023 in surprisingly good financial shape, ending with a surplus of \$11,197, the first surplus in many years. Thus, we are starting the new year with a healthy reserves balance. Never the less, we expect 2024 to be a challenging year, as pledge support, our main source of income, continues to decline.

Below is a summary of the major changes to the budget for 2024. See the budget pages for details.

Operating Fund	2023	2024	Change
Receipts	\$486,650	\$488,700	\$2,050
Expenses	\$542,750	\$561,600	\$18,850
Net Excess of Receipts over Expenses (Deficit)	(\$56,100)	(\$72,900)	(\$16,800)

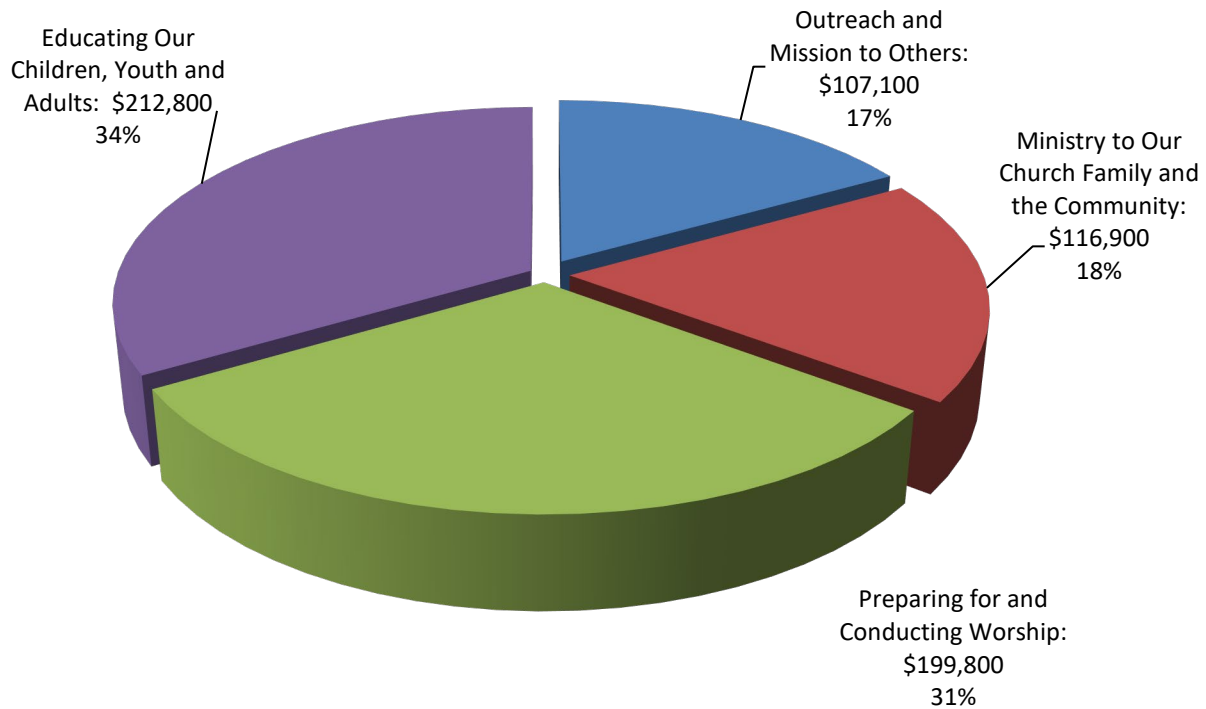


Major Budget Changes for 2024

- There is a very modest increase forecasted in receipts even though pledge support is expected to be \$20,000 lower than 2023 primarily due to generous pledgers moving away or passing on. However, Pilgrim is doing well and has increased their contribution for 2024. And, our income from building usage has doubled over last year as more events are taking place in our facility and we have a new paying tenant, Mezoco,
- The increase in expenses is mostly due to pay raises and benefit premium increases totaling \$13,300 and a \$5,000 increase in the amount GRCC pays toward the Youth Ministry program, which will be operating for its first full year. The net change in other expenses is negligible, with some increasing and some decreasing.
- Property/Liability Insurance costs continue to rise with another 8% increase for 2024. These premiums have risen a total of 63% over last 4 years due to all the natural disaster that, thankfully, have not affected GRCC. Once again, the Endowment Fund Trustees agreed that the property portion of the insurance premium (amounting to \$58,272) could be paid from the Building Maintenance Fund reserves, thus removing it from the Operating Fund and Building Maintenance Fund budgets. Even with that help, the Operating Fund will be paying \$2,200 more for the liability portion of the coverage.
- The Endowment Fund contribution to the Building Maintenance Fund will be \$75,000 for 2024.

Proposed Budgeted Expenses for 2024: \$636,600

The total proposed 2024 expenditures combined for the Operating Fund and the Building Maintenance Fund are \$636,600, broken down into the four categories shown below, which represent the ministry and mission of the church. Descriptions of each category are contained in the pages that follow.

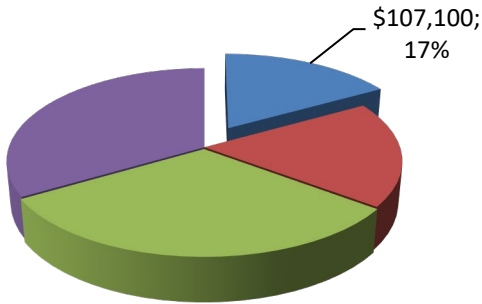


- We devote a large portion of our budget for serving our church family and the community through worship (\$199,800) and ministry (\$116,900).
- \$212,800 is allocated from the Operating Fund to support a robust Christian education program, including a Youth Ministry program run by a partnership of five local churches, including GRCC. An additional \$5,000 will come from a designated fund outside the Operating Fund for the Ministry of Children and Youth education programs.
- A total of \$107,100 is allocated for mission and outreach. Of the total amount, \$28,000 is for benevolences and the remainder represents an allocation of professional staff compensation and building operation and maintenance costs. \$7,800 in unspent allocations from prior years is also available for benevolences. We augment our giving through non-budgeted contributions and hands-on volunteering.
- The expenses for staff compensation and benefits are allocated across all the categories based on the percentage of time the professional and support staffs are expecting to work in each of those areas in 2024.
- The cost for equipping and maintaining the church and parsonage buildings for daily operations is allocated across the four categories on a pro rata basis.

Explanation of Budgeted Expense Categories

The four budget categories are described in more detail below, including a brief explanation of the work or tasks covered by each portion of the budget. As mentioned above, the expenses for staff compensation and benefits and the cost of equipping and maintaining our buildings are allocated across all the categories. A more detailed breakdown of the expenses is shown in the full proposed budget on the budget pages.

Outreach and Mission to Others



In addition to paying benevolences, the expenses in this category include an allocation of professional staff compensation and building operational and maintenance costs.

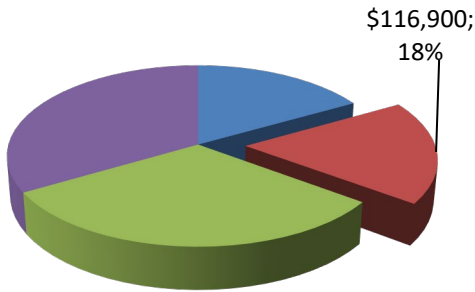
A very important portion of our mission extends beyond our immediate church family. Through our budget, we support:

- Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM), the United Church of Christ (UCC)'s mission for ministering to people in the U.S. and around the world, and the Central Atlantic Conference.
- Charities, such as Meeting Essential Needs with Dignity (MEND), the Community FoodBank of NJ, Toni's Kitchen, and disaster relief organizations, through money allocated in the budget to the Ministry of Outreach & Mission (MOM). MOM has also contributed toward mission trips, such as the trips to Haiti, and often matches contributions raised by the congregation or the church school children to organizations such as the Heifer Project.

Non-budgeted giving and outreach supplements our budgeted giving through:

- Special offering appeals for One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS), Neighbors in Need (NIN), Strengthen the Church and the Christmas offering,
- Donations of time and talents to tend to the Gracefully Green Garden (whose harvest is donated to local food pantries), donations of food and other essentials to the less fortunate and help with refugee resettlement,
- Special mission projects, such as trips to South Africa and Haiti, and
- Contributions from the Women's Association fund-raising events (e.g., Rummage Sales and Antiques Shows) to our scholarship funds, Integrity House, MEND, World Central Kitchen, local food pantries, etc.

Ministry to Our Church Family and the Community



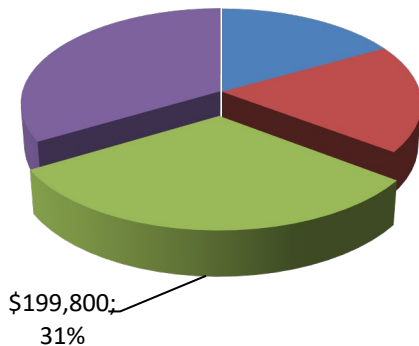
Volunteers spend hours each week tending to many of the financial, educational, music and organizational tasks required to run the church. Through their commitment, these volunteers save us the expense of hiring professionals to do these tasks.

Ministering to our church family and the local community is a vital part of our work. It includes:

- Pastoral care to those who are ill, hospitalized, bereaved, preparing for marriage, going through divorce, struggling with their faith or facing other crises.
- Communication of news and events to members through monthly newsletters and weekly and special emails.
- Providing meeting space for community groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Cub Scouts, Civic Conference Committee and the Band Parents' Pancake Breakfast.

The expenses in this category primarily include allocated professional and support staff compensation, allocated building operational and maintenance costs, and administrative expenses, such as postage, telephone, computers and office supplies.

Preparing for and Conducting Worship



Our impressive music program, attracting children and adults, includes three vocal choirs and three handbell choirs.

Our very successful Organ Refurbishment was financed by contributions to the Organ Fund, which is not part of the Operating Fund.

Worship is central to our church's mission and requires a significant part of our professional staff's time to:

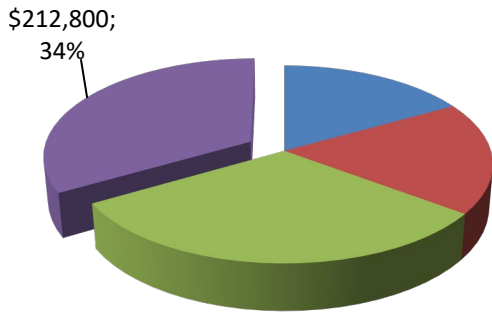
- Plan for Sunday morning worship, including preparing sermons, selecting, rehearsing and preparing appropriate choral and instrumental music, and
- Conduct weddings, funerals, and other special services.



The expenses in this category include allocated professional and support staff compensation and building operational and maintenance costs, as well as most of the costs associated with the music program*, worship supplies, bulletins, etc.

* The Glen Ridge Community Concert series is not funded through the Music Program portion of the Operating Fund budget. It is self-supporting through donations and ticket sales.

Educating Our Children, Youth and Adults



Pilgrim Preschool has its own budget overseen by the Pilgrim Board, which is made up of Church members and parent representatives. In addition to their annual contribution to the Church, they pay additional costs for building maintenance and upgrades.

Our extensive Christian education program includes a:

- Thriving church school for preschool through 7th grade with a team of volunteer teachers,
- New program for middle and high school students sponsored by 5 local churches.
- Confirmation program,
- Family Faith for faith development and fellowship for families with young children,
- Vacation Bible School, and
- Adult education, including Second Hour programs.

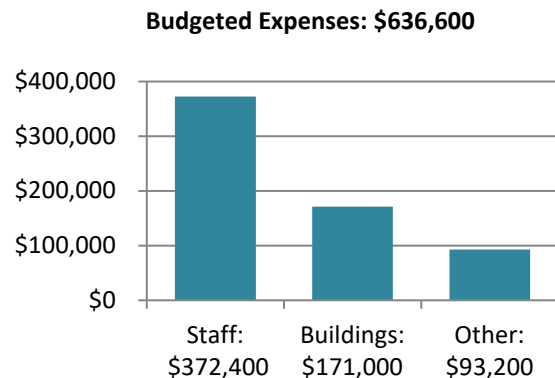


Expenses include allocated professional and support staff compensation and building operational and maintenance costs, curriculum materials and other supplies.

Another Way to Look at Budgeted Expenses

The pie charts shown above describe how all the expenses in our budget are allocated to fulfill the ministry and mission of the church. However, the largest amounts in those allocations are the costs to pay our staff and to support our buildings, as shown in the chart to the right:

- About 58% of our budget will go to pay our professional and support staff,
- Another 27% will go to maintain and equip our buildings, and
- The remaining 15% of our budget is for administrative expenses, ministry expenses and Outreach & Mission benevolences.



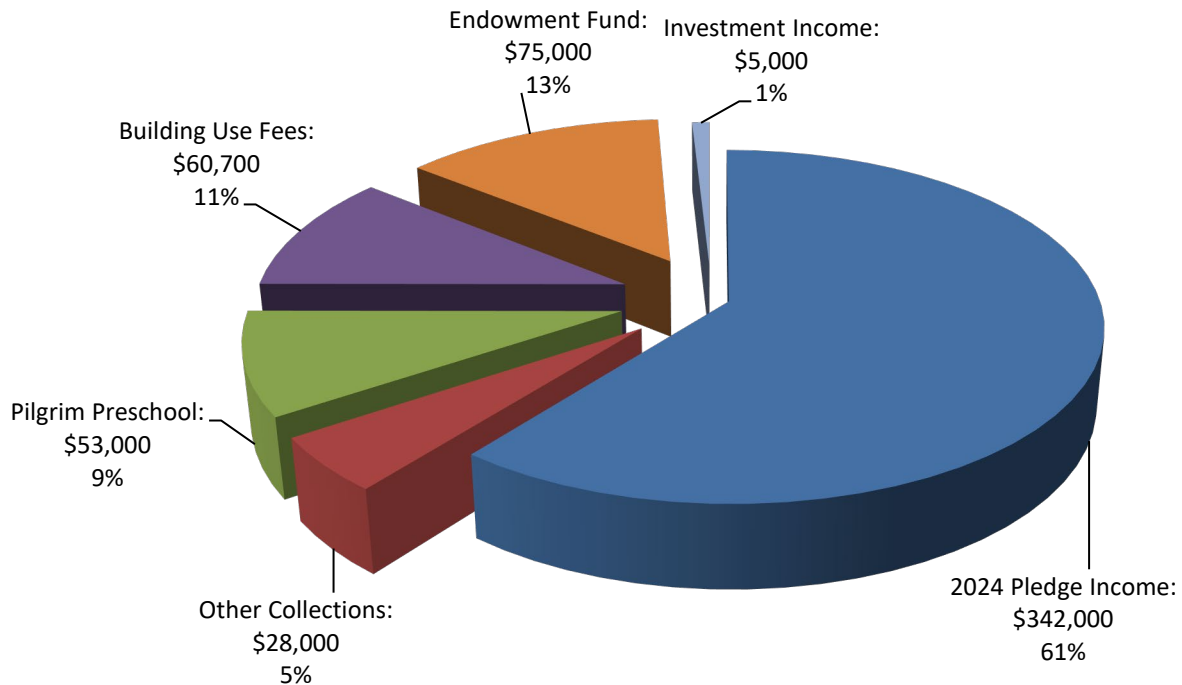
Cost Sharing with the Building Maintenance Fund (BMF)

There are significant costs related to maintaining the parsonage and the church building and to keep the church school wing in compliance with accessibility and safety requirements in order to run the Pilgrim Preschool. The Operating Fund pays for routine expenses, such as the cost of utilities, insurance, supplies and maintenance contracts. The BMF pays for the upkeep of the buildings and grounds using funds allocated to it from the Endowment Fund. The BMF has been paying the greatly increased property insurance premiums the last few years.

When necessary, the generosity of our members helps fund extraordinary capital expenses. These extra funds and their corresponding expenses are not reflected in the budget.

Proposed Budgeted Revenue for 2024: \$563,700

To maintain our church and accomplish our mission, the proposed combined Operating Fund and Building Maintenance Fund revenue target for 2024 is \$563,700 with the funds coming from the sources indicated in the chart below.



- Our biggest source of income is from pledges. We have budgeted the receipt of \$342,000 in pledge income, including other regular support, based on our pledge campaign for 2024 and the reality of what we received last year from non-pledgers. Please note that each member's pledge (and payment of that pledge) is extremely important to the budgeting process.
- Other collections, projected to be \$28,000, include loose offerings, church school offerings, a realistic receipt of 2023 unpaid pledges and year-end and deficit reduction contributions based on recent history. It does not include special offerings, such as One Great Hour of Sharing, as these are paid directly to the recipients and do not pass through the budget.
- The Pilgrim Preschool has agreed to contribute \$53,000 for 2024.
- Building use fees of \$60,700 include rent we expect to receive from the Saint Francis of Assisi parish of the American National Catholic Church, Mezoco, Glen Ridge Historical Society, the New Jersey Association of the CAC, music recitals and other uses. In addition, we often receive donations from the community groups that use our space.
- The Endowment Fund Trustees have agreed to contribute \$75,000 to the Building Maintenance Fund for 2024.
- Investment income is projected to be \$5,000, based on the current interest environment.

Proposed Budget Deficit for 2024: \$72,900

The proposed Operating Fund budget for 2024 has a deficit of \$72,900.

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*The following reports are not provided in this online version of the Annual Report:

- Pilgrim Preschool Treasurer's Report
- Endowment Fund Assets
- Treasurer's Report
- Proposed 2024 Budget