

# RIDGEFIELD-CRYSTAL LAKE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

JANUARY 28, 2024



## Ridgefield-Crystal Lake Presbyterian Church

*We gather in grace*, connected by a sense of place and purpose with generations of faithful servant-leaders who journeyed before us. We seek to open our hearts as we open our doors – with room for everyone – and to open all our senses to God’s life-affirming, life-changing presence through creative and diverse worship.

*We grow in grace*, not because we know all the answers – or even all the questions – but because we are drawn to God’s word and Christ’s example. We seek to be Christ’s family here and now – to embrace each other as we are, to nurture who we might become, to celebrate with one another in good times and encourage one another in hard times, to listen and learn and lead.

*We go in grace*, challenged and strengthened by the Spirit to do God’s work and show God’s love in the world. We seek to look beyond our walls and beyond ourselves – to see God’s image in every face, and to serve God’s people in every place life leads us.

The journey continues in an ever-widening circle of grace.

**SESSION ELDERS**

**Class 2026**

Lisa Krchak  
Mary Finch

**Class 2025**

Mary Ellen Shine  
Joan Jensema  
Jim Pracht

**Class of 2024**

Deb Bendis  
Laura Bauman  
Beth Holland  
Debbie Ehlenburg  
Brenda Baser - Youth  
Elder

**Class of 2023**

Brian Sanders  
Lisa Krchak  
Vicki Brown  
Brynn LeFevre – Youth  
Elder

**DEACONS**

**Class 2026**

Karen Nelson  
Kathy Rabe  
Pasty Ihrke  
Susan Castroita

**Class of 2025**

Beverly Kerman  
Aage Christiansen

**Class of 2024**

Karen Salman  
Cara Vandermyde Janet  
Kvam Holub

**Class of 2023**

Laurie Jensen  
Karen Nelson  
Julie Baser  
Karen Hutchings

**Corporate Officers**

**President**  
**Secretary**  
**Financial Secretary**

Mary Finch  
Lee Ekstrom  
Laurie Jensen

**Vice President**  
**Treasurer**  
**Clerk of Session**

Mary Ellen Shine  
Linda Peel  
Lee Ekstrom

**Nominating Committee**

Debbie Ehlenburg  
(Session)  
Joan Jensema  
(Session)

Kathy Rabe  
(Deacon)

Jim Bauman (2024)  
David Woodruff (2024)

Katy Holub (2025)  
Sue Neuschel (2025)

**Audit Committee**

Rick Pohl (2024)

Tom Lafontaine (2025)

Marcus Koronkiewicz  
(2026)

**Church Staff**

**Pastor - Interim**  
**Administrative Assistant**  
**Coordinator of Children & Family**  
**Ministries**  
**Custodian**

Nicole Melara  
Lynn Hoch  
Raechel Sowa  
  
Cindee Robinson

**Music Director**  
**Accompanist**  
**Organist**  
  
**Music Ministries Asst.**

Anthony Jay Houston  
Ann Legg  
Mike Griswold  
  
Scott Iddings

**Membership Statistics (2023)**

**Baptisms**

None

**Member Deaths**

John Demcisak  
Raj Dencker  
Joyce Rainey  
Gordon Richardson  
Cheryl Brinks

**Confirmands**

Henry Pracht  
Caleb Baser

**New Members**

Drew Duffin  
Patsy Ihrke

Total Members as of December 31, 2022:	181
Minus Member Deaths	5
Plus, Reinstated & New Members & Confirmands	4
Minus Members Transferred/Moved/Other	<u>6</u>
<b>Total Members as of December 31, 2023:</b>	<b>174</b>

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## **INTERIM PASTOR'S REPORT**

On 2023's Activities, Growth & Development  
Prepared for the  
Annual Meeting of Ridgefield Crystal Lake Presbyterian Church

*"I want their hearts to be encouraged and united in love, so that they may have all the riches of assured understanding, and have the knowledge of God's mystery, that is Christ himself, in whom is hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."  
Colossians 2:2-3*

While we don't know if the letter to the Colossians was written directly by Paul, we do know that the author spoke about the transforming work of Christ that continued beyond the resurrection as Christian communities grew and developed in the same Spirit that inspired Paul in his work. This passage of Colossians, whether written by Paul's own hand or not, reflects a sentiment that is deeply felt by Christian leaders across the board, but maybe most especially by those of us walking with congregations through periods of transition. As your Interim Pastor, I want more than anything for you to be encouraged and united in love as we as a congregation move closer toward a clearer picture of all that is growing and developing- the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that the Spirit is accomplishing today, right here at RCLPC, just as the Spirit did 2,000 years ago in the Ancient Near East.

As of this writing, I have served RCLPC for just over two months. My tenure began on November 1, 2023 with a move from Milwaukee, which was quickly followed by a bout of Covid which caused me to miss my first scheduled Sunday in the pulpit! In spite of a rocky start, the people of RCLPC were warm and welcoming. Folks were eager to share the work and life of the church. They were gracious and gathered me quickly into fellowship.

I was honored to be entering RCLPC's ministry in the footsteps of Rev. John Dillon, who had retired from ministry in June of 2023. I am also incredibly grateful to those who stepped in and provided good care and helpful guidance in the five months that RCLPC was without formal pastoral leadership. I am especially thankful for the energy and leadership of Raechel Sowa in that time. She was a beloved figure at RCLPC and will be missed as she has been missed since her resignation at the end of December.

It was lovely to begin my time with you at the end of the year. Together, we completed a stewardship campaign. We wandered our way through Advent along with the songs of Luke's gospel. I participated in my first Cookie Walk and worshipped with my first Christmas cantata (with a delicious breakfast!). The Christmas season was made beautiful with our decorated sanctuary, and it was made meaningful with an increased focus on mission opportunities.

As we move into 2024 and into this year of pastoral transition, I look forward to continued opportunities for new RCLPC firsts and for continued opportunities to participate in meaningful activities. These, balanced with the comfort of cherished and familiar "church," will enable us to seek the Spirit of wisdom and knowledge of God's mystery, that is Christ himself. May we be encouraged and blessed as we go!

 *Pastor Nicole*

## WORSHIP TEAM 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

In June, 2023, RCLPC bid farewell to **Pastor John Dillon** and welcomed as the interim **Pastor Nicole Melara** on November 1, 2023. I thank **Fred Neuschel, Jac Kelewae, and Chris Pickett** who along with two pastors from outside of the church filled in as pulpit supply during the intervening months and provided meaningful sermons. Church services continue to be available live via Zoom and YouTube and are archived on YouTube. **Steve Connell** and his assistant **WILL EMMANUEL** continued to provide their excellent technical expertise every Sunday. *Please contact Steve if you are interested in being part of this ministry.*

I thank the team members for their work and input during the past year: **Dan Terlep** scheduled ushers for every service. He provided additional information to the usher duties form to reflect changes that were made during the year.

**Lynn Stange** creatively arranged liturgists who assisted with the leadership of the service. Thanks to Lynn, the youth are invited to assist as well as the adults.

**Mary Boom** who assisted with shopping for the communion bread and grape juice.

**Kristi Geggi** and the Worship Enhancement Team who used their creative skills to elevated the worship experience with banners and activities.

**Anthony Huston**, Director of Music, led the choir and complemented the worship experience with a variety of musical genres as well as with vocal and instrumental talent from our congregation and the community. **Scott Iddings**, Music Ministry Assistant, led the band and is an integral part of the worship program and enhanced the worship services. **Ann Legg** plays the piano and accompanies the choir each week. Mike Griswold accompanies the hymns with the organ. Their time and sharing of their talents are much appreciated.

The Worship Team is dedicated to providing integral elements to each service and look forward to continuing to help make each worship service meaningful.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Bauman

## Music Ministry In Review 2023

2023 was a lovely year for the RCLPC music department. We provided two Cantatas, a mix of traditional and contemporary worship music from both the band and choir, and helped the congregation maintain a sense of stability and community as we bid farewell to Pastor John this past June (with a full season of John Bell music as a proper send off!).

Special thanks to Thomas, Jodi and Al for continuing to support the RCLPC band with their talents. The band has explored new music as they have adapted more music from the hymnal to provide more familiar music for the congregation, as well as preparing new anthems.

We also welcomed Amare Blazek as a guest bass player, Anna Griswold on clarinet, Teddy Pracht in piano, Max & Arther Pracht with their sax/trombone duet, Will & Naomi Emmanuel on Oboe & Flute, Patsy Ihrke on Organ, and Katy Holub on Acapella Sundays! Our congregation is filled with talented musicians.

Guest musicians such as the Stan Dard Jazz Project, Dan Bretz (percussion), Troy Sennet (bass), Evelyn Thom (guitar) and Nannette Felix (harp) provided gifts for our worship through music. Of note were our two cantatas: Robert Ray's Gospel Mass for Easter and Conrad Susa's Carols & Lullabies for Christmas.

Special thanks to the tech team (Steve and Will) for helping the music of RCLPC be heard at its best both in the sanctuary and online. And to Ann and Mike for their continued support as accompanists for the Choir. And finally to Scott for his constant presence and support of all things RCLPC, especially the music department and the antics of Anthony!

As we continue to grow, we hope to continue seeing the return of past members, and gain new membership from the next generation. To aide in these efforts, Anthony hopes to offer more opportunities for guest musicians to join our worship and continues to seek opportunities for collaboration with other local churches or outside opportunities for our musicians to share their gifts. We pursue these goals under the guidance and love of Christ!

Amen.

—RCLPC music dept

## **Christian Education Annual Report to the Congregation 2023**

### **Passing on the Love of God**

Christian Education kicked off the new year with lessons from the Follow Me curriculum published by PCUSA. We met in one classroom at the start of the classes and then the teachers were given the option to move into a k-4th grade class and a 5th-8th grade class. Teachers rotated every three weeks, apart from Al Popp who taught for two months. We met weekly but per parent's request, took Sundays off that coincided with a three day weekend. During Lent we used Finding the Practice All Around Us from Follow Me. This mirrored the theme Live and Love Generously that was used in worship.

Our family ministry nights continued and in February we hosted Shrove Tuesday on Sunday night with pancakes, flapjack flipping relay in the sanctuary and a trivia game. In May we hosted a Pentecost Picnic around the new fire pit Brendan Baser planned and implemented for his Eagle Scout project. In August we did a back-to-school movie night and in October we did a walking taco and campfire fun. These nights average 20 people and are well received.

Once again, we hosted a Blessing of the Backpacks in August. It was held during outside worship and over 30 backpacks were blessed. In September we kicked off the new year with a family Sunday School and we offered the church the opportunity to write their New Year Resolution. We returned to the classroom and divided the children into two classrooms (K-4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup>). Our first 3 weeks were centered around the theme of Circles All Around Us and then we moved into a Young Justice Builders series on creation for four weeks and then four weeks focused on poverty. In October the entire congregation participated in Psalmtober (read a selected Psalm a day for the entire month) and Hazel Griswold, Anna Griswold, Cassidy Koronkiewicz, Cara Koronkiewicz and Teddy Pracht all read an assigned Psalm and then provided artwork for the bulletin. On October 29th, Hazel Griswold was presented her 3rd grade Bible.

In December, the congregation was encouraged to gather for fellowship following worship each Sunday, so classes only met the first and second Sundays of Advent to prepare for the season and then were asked to gather after worship. A family Christmas Eve service was held in conjunction with the 4th Sunday of Advent and the children/youth presented a pageant written by Raechel Sowa.

Teachers were presented with scripture and ideas but encouraged them to teach using their gifts. Al Popp, Marcus Koronkiewicz, Todd Lefevre, Brynn Lefevre, Raechel Sowa, Paula Viner, Karen Nelson, Beth Holland, and Kathy Rabe led our children.

Pastor John hosted a Coffee Chat during the 9 am hour and followed the lessons the children were learning, giving the parents and adult members both an opportunity to have deeper discussions as well as adult time as there is a time for everything. During Lent a Gospel Challenge was issued. The idea was to read a Gospel a week and then Sunday mornings you had the opportunity to learn and ask questions.

Sunday School and Coffee Chats are not the only place where faith discussions happen with Christian Education. Confirmation met in September for two Saturday classes using a new curriculum titled, *Changing the World-Confirmation for the Missional Church* by Mark D. Hinds and Henry Pracht and Caleb Baser were commissioned on September 24, 2023. This is far from the end of their learning though. They will now gather with their mentors, Drew Duffin and Scott Iddings for 8 “check ins” prior to meeting with session in May 2024.

The Youth Group this year participated in the Souper Bowl of Caring in February and although timing didn't work out, Feed My Starving Children was offered in May. Many of our youth attend the family ministry nights. On Maundy Thursday, the youth gathered around the fire pit to start the 24 hours of prayer the church does annually. A mission trip to Bimidji, MN was offered in June and Caleb Baser, Henry Pracht, and Arthur Pracht attended along with their leaders, Raechel Sowa and Rob Baser. In November our youth attended the Fall Retreat at Stronghold. The retreat was led by leaders from Blackhawk Presbytery and Raechel Sowa led a session on loving yourself.



It is with a heart full of gratitude that the Christian Education team says thank you to Paula Viner for 7 wonderful years of service to the youth and accepts her decision to step down from the position of youth leader. Paula has volunteered her time to plan engaging activities and outings for over 40 youth and will be missed. She participated in youth mission trips, retreats, countless lock ins, numerous mission opportunities, lots of laughter, a few tears, deep discussions, carpool karaoke, Covid summer games, relay races, pie eating contests, kick ball games, campfires, even dyed her hair like a rainbow as a fundraiser.... the list truly goes on and on. Thank you, Paula for all you did and continue to do for the children of RCLPC.

So, as we reflect on Christian Education, it is worth repeating that we realize that not only is there a time for every season but that ***“God has made everything beautiful in its time.... I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. That each of them may eat and drink and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God.” Ecclesiastes 3: 11-13.*** We are grateful for all the toil of so many volunteers who have stepped up and for the participants who have enriched our lives and our programs. We are also grateful that God has built a community through Christian Education, and we hope that in 2024 we find our numbers to continue to grow in strength and depth.

Respectfully Submitted:

Raechel Sowa

## **Congregational Vitality Team Report 2023**

Ridgefield Crystal Lake Presbyterian Church is one of 17 congregations within the Blackhawk Presbytery which have joined together in the PC(USA)'s Matthew 25 initiative, based on Jesus' call to care for the "least of us", whom he loved most dearly. The three main areas of focus of Matthew 25 are Building Congregational Vitality, Dismantling Structural Racism and Eradicating Systemic Poverty. After much consideration, Session chose to place our efforts on building Congregational Vitality by identifying those in need within our church and the communities we serve.

In the past year we held two series of Conversation Circles on controversial topics that resulted in lively discussions and a wonderful way to connect with each other

In 2023, we were fortunate to be able to work with two groups offering events within our communities. For several months we collaborated with First Congregational Church of Crystal Lake to plan a Guns to Gardens event., which was held in November. The surrendered guns were disabled on the spot, and the pieces were sent to Raw Tools organization in Colorado to be melted down and made into garden tools.

In June Blackhawk Presbytery offered a People. Place. Purpose. workshop in DeKalb for congregations desiring to build the vitality of their congregations. Topics presented included “How to Identify needs within your community and how to find those who can help”; “How to use your church building to accomplish your mission”, and “How to identify the assets within your congregation to create a radically inclusive church”

Jesus tells us that what we do for those in need, we do for him. We welcome you to join us, and share your gifts and skills in making a difference and finding fulfillment in this work. If this mission aligns with your interests and values, please reach out to us!

Respectfully Submitted:

Mary Ellen Shine

## **Administration: Personnel, Policies and Procedures Team Report 2023**

The role of the administration/personnel team is to oversee the work environment, create an open environment to discuss personnel issues, and to review the Policy and Procedure Manual of the church as needed.

We have maintained maps and placards with information regarding Active Shooter as well as Fire and Tornado instructions. In the spring, we gave the annual spring training for fire, tornado and child protection policies during a Sunday service.

A technical assistant was brought on to help the Technical Director during Sunday services. This was a volunteer position. As we continue to use Zoom/You Tube for our worship services, we will need to add backup for when the Director is unavailable for the service.

The new website has performed well. Committees are able to work with the Administrative Assistant to create a post and updates for the calendar as needed.

In December, our Coordinator of Children and Family Ministries resigned from her position effective December 28, 2023. As we move into 2024, we will review the position which will emphasize care and activities for our families and youth.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Krchak

## **Annual Report from Building and Grounds 2023**

### **Wednesday Warriors**

Our big project this year was the residing of the oldest section of the building and new roofs for two of the eight flat roof sections. The driver of this was the rotting of the trim molding on the building that was allowing bats, birds and insects into the attic and belfry. The big fear was that rain water was also getting behind the siding and causing more unseen deterioration. Dave Steele and Lou Rabe discovered that not many contractors wanted to work on an old building or they would bid the project so high as to be not be taken seriously. Jac Kelewae and Steve Connell found Gen Ex who had done excellent work for us in the past. Session gave us the go-ahead approval and the work began.

Of course, with any remodel project on such an old building there will be some surprises and we had ours. The flat roof repair above the choir room required moving four air conditioning units. Two of those units were brought up to full operating levels and two of the oldest units were replaced, and that cost was not part of the original plan. Those two new units serve the sanctuary and when replaced there was additional work to attach them to our heating and cooling system. There was enough coolant gas salvaged to service the other two air conditioning units that serve the education wing. The front door portico was added and paid for by an anonymous donor. The windows needed to be repainted and storm windows replaced which we also did not originally plan for, and the result was a cost overrun. The finance team was able to move money around in the bank accounts and all the bills were paid without taking out a loan. The down side is we have depleted our cash reserves, but through your generosity we are rebuilding reserves to a more comfortable level.

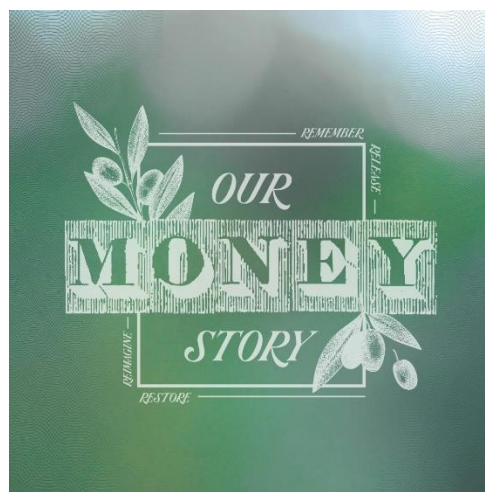
The Building & Grounds team has a group of dedicated volunteers that are called the Wednesday Warriors, and they are at church every Wednesday to help keep our building in great shape. Besides handling the major re-siding project, the Wednesday Warriors have also removed the rotting swing set, installed the basketball hoop (provided by a donation), and completed all the many maintenance projects to keep our church in good condition: replacing batteries and lightbulbs, unclogging drains, touching up paint, maintaining the grounds, installing church posters, setting up and tearing down chairs and tables for many events, patching the parking lot, assisting the Worship Enhancement team to set up in the sanctuary, washing windows, completing all the state-required inspections and certifications, and much more.

Our team lost two valued members this year with the passing of John Demcisak and Ed Waters moving out of the area to be near his family. We have welcomed Russ Hamm to

our midst, and he has already contributed much to our group. Jim Zid, Jac Kelewae, Dave Steele, Steve Connell, Rick Pohl and Chris Picket round out the merry little band of Wednesday Warriors.

Respectfully submitted:  
Lou Rabe

## Stewardship Team Report 2023



### Season of Stewardship November 1-26th, 2023

*The budget isn't just numbers on one side and our values on the other. The budget is a reflection of who we are as a church and the investment we want to make in our people, community and the world. "-author unknown*

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We entered into this season of stewardship reflecting on our Money Story. The story begun in 1839 and is still being written today. It is a story of love, compassion, service, outreach, learning, growing, fellowship, and community. It is a story of people doing God's work in the world. This work takes not only time and dedication, but it takes money. The topic of money is not an easy topic to discuss and often invites tension, but money and possessions are one of the most common topics in scripture. Jesus talked about money more than faith and prayer.

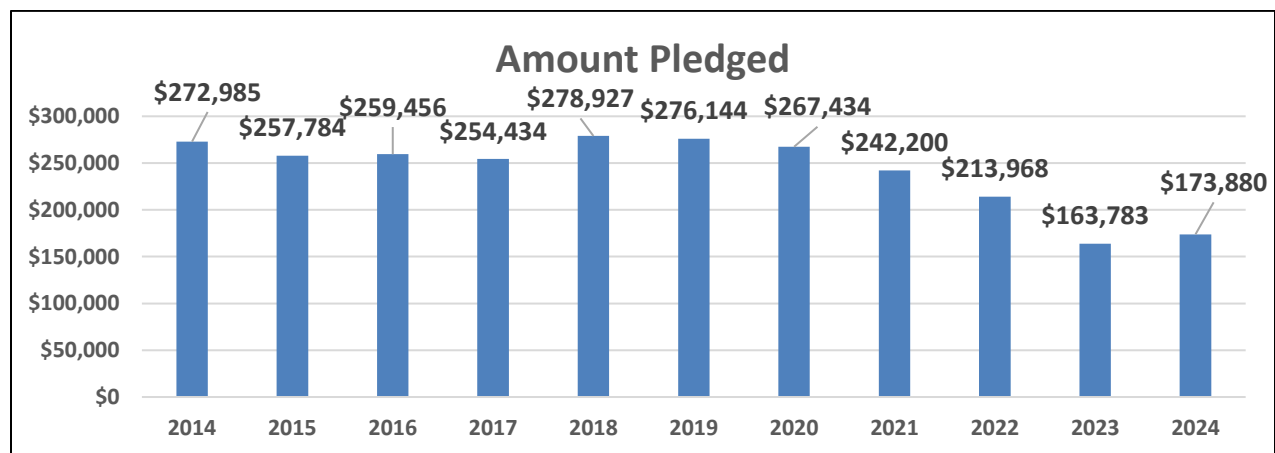
RCLPC is in transition. This November we welcomed Pastor Nicole as our interim pastor and seek her leadership and guidance as we begin the process of hiring our next pastor. This time of transition brings with it the unknown, however, one thing is for certain: the work of RCLPC with God as our guide will continue with your commitment. Not only your financial commitment but your commitment of time. Money and time you will dedicate to the work of the church.

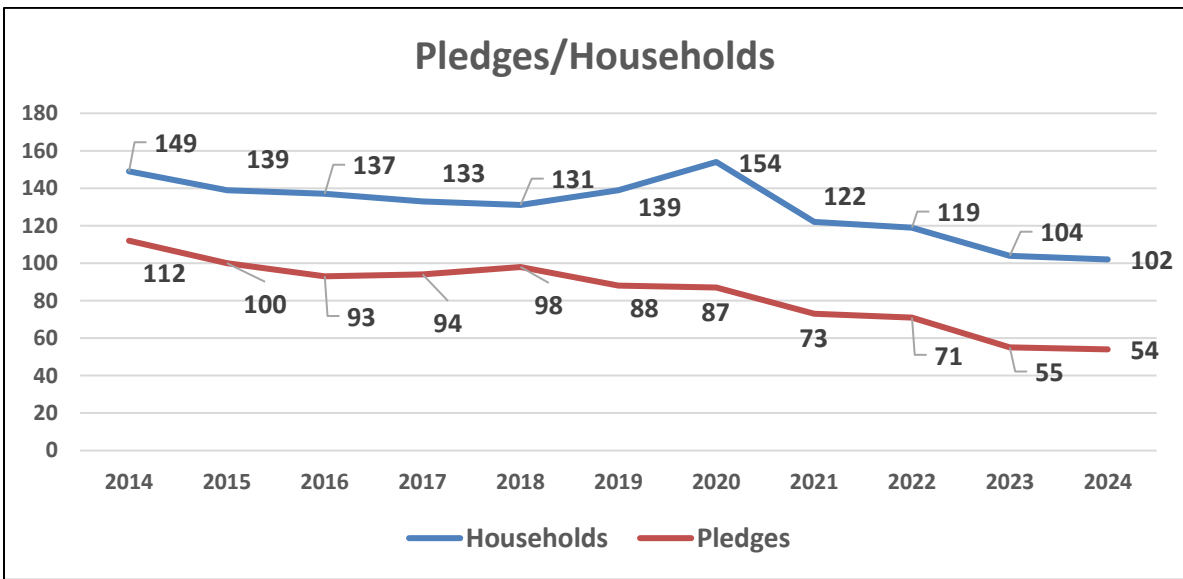
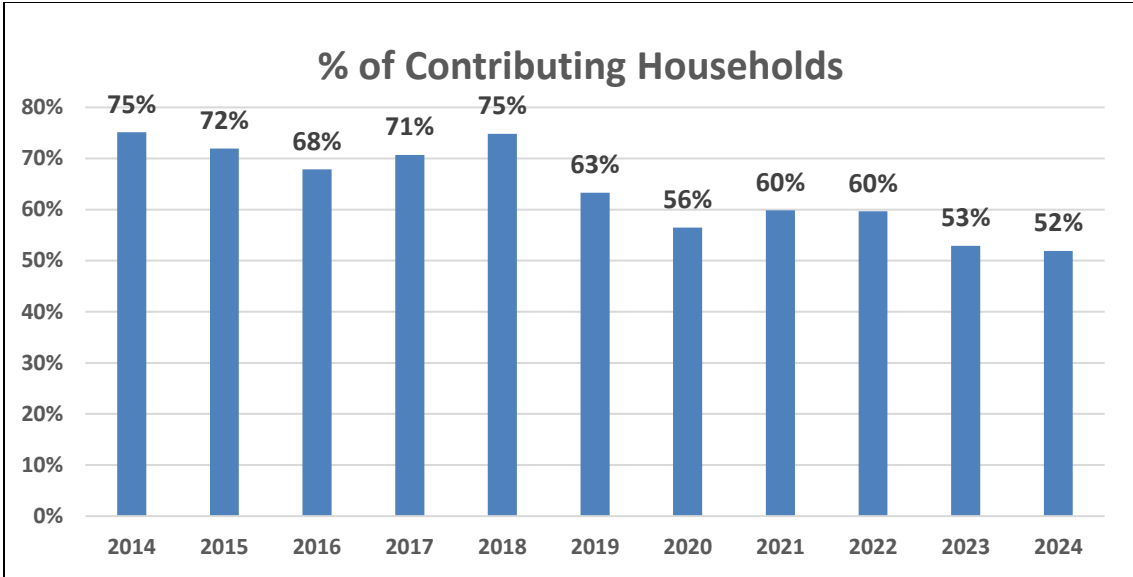
The Stewardship Team offered a study journal to guide you and help you explore your own Money Story. This journal has art, poetry, meditation and reflection for you. This will assist your prayerful consideration on how you will give to RCLPC. You may pick up a copy of the journal outside the sanctuary or ask the office to print one for you.

The Stewardship Team created a Stewardship Table in Fellowship Hall for your Money Story quest. The Stewardship Table was the place you could come to ask questions, see how RCLPC money is spent each year, find out how to pledge online and ways you can give.

The best stories captivate and transform us. They change how we live. During this Stewardship Season, we invite you to remember, release, reimagine, and restore your Money Stories as we write the one God is pointing us to live into.

We asked the RCLPC congregation to join us in this Season of Gratitude celebrating Stewardship is Love. The 2023 Stewardship campaign received 54 pledges for a total of \$173,880 compared to 2022's 55 pledges for a total of \$163,783. The graphs below provide RCLPC pledging history of the past ten years.





We look forward to 2024 to continue to heal our country and global community, as we continue to grow and work together as faithful stewards of all God has given us. Thank you for all the many ways you help support God’s work here at RCLPC.

Thank you,

**The Stewardship Committee**

Jim Pracht, Mary Ellen Shine, Mary Finch, Joan Jensema, Beth Holland, Deb Bendis, Raechel Sowa, Lee Ekstrom, Pastor Nicole Melara

## Deacon's Annual Report 2023

The purpose of the deacons is to get to know the members of the congregation, communicate information to members and from members to the pastor, encourage fellowship among members and to help those in need.

Specifically, these responsibilities include: care and assistance, caring card ministry, coffee and treats after church, fellowship activities and special events, greeters for services, funerals and welcoming ministry.

This past year we have been able to have more in-person activities because of the lessening of covid restrictions. These gatherings have included 4 funerals and receptions and 16 potlucks or brunches, including one for Kim Stewart's retirement, one for Pastor Dillon's retirement and one for Pastor Nicole Melara's welcome. We also gave prayer shawls made by our members to several people for comfort in a time of need.

Deacons enjoy reaching out to each member of our congregation in-person or via emails, hand-written note cards or phone calls. If you have a preference, please let your deacon know which type of connection you prefer. Family group lists were posted on bulletin boards, along with photos of the current deacon for each group, enabling all members to recognize their deacon more easily. We hope to have a "meet your deacon" Sunday in the near future.

Respectfully submitted,  
Janet Kvam-Holub  
Deacon moderator

## The Mission Outreach Ministry Team 2023

*Promotes opportunities for mission outreach both locally and globally*

The Mission Outreach Team remains dedicated to informing our congregation of the opportunities for service and stewardship in our neighborhoods, our nation and our world

### Local Missions:

- **Crystal Lake Food Pantry** – Several volunteers from RCLPC serve on Fridays along with volunteers from the First Baptist Church in Crystal Lake. The number of clients served monthly is around 1,100. Paul Georgy became the new board president, Mike Rugh served as the chair of the Governance Committee, and David Woodruff continued to be in charge of the volunteers. RCLPC hosted a retreat for the Food Pantry Board on

August 26. A Community Harvest Food Drive was held in November, and RCLPC filled a huge box with canned goods and staples.

• **Keeping Families Covered (Diaper Bank)-**

Five volunteers from RCLPC serve at the diaper bank 3 Wednesdays each month. Typically, 1,650 diapers were given out to individual walk-in clients and several agencies each month. The 20 McHenry County agencies that are served are charged a \$1,000 membership fee annually.

• **Homelessness Outreach-** Community Resource Days occur twice a month at Willow Creek Church in Crystal Lake. This mission receives strong support from the UCC in McHenry with their Compassion for Campers mission. RCLPC supports both projects through funding. \$500 was approved for PADS, \$500 for emergency winter housing, and \$500 to Compassion for Campers at UCC for supplies. In November 33 people received items such as sleeping bags, stoves, propane tanks, and tarps. \$500 was also sent to the WARP Corps in Woodstock, which provides help for the homeless.

• **Souper Bowl of Caring-** proceeds went to the Woodstock Food Pantry • CROP Hunger Walk- The Walk was held in Cary in October and raised \$15,094. • Joy Giving Tree- presents and gift cards from requests on the Giving Tree angels were donated for distribution to local agencies.

• **Cookie Walk-**The annual Cookie Walk was held on Dec.9 and raised over \$3800. Guests were lined up by 8:15 and only a few plates of cookies and breads were left by 10:30.

• **Easter Baskets-22** Easter baskets were made up and delivered to the Home of the Sparrow. \$25 gift cards were included for the mothers.

• **Earth Care Team-**The Green Living Fair was held April 23. It was well represented and well attended. Clean up crews were organized for the bike trail along Rt 14 from July through October. The team researched a contract with the solar company MC2 to provide solar energy to RCLPC, reducing our energy bill by 20%.

• **Compassion, Peace and Justice-** An offering of letters was held in February, asking legislators to tweak the Farm Bill. The Pride Parade was well attended in Woodstock in June.

• **Guns to Gardens-** This project was held at the First Congregational Church in Crystal Lake on November 4. It was the first of its kind in Illinois. It offered an opportunity for the safe surrender of a gun in exchange for a gift card. The guns were then chopped up and turned into a garden tool by Raw Tools of Colorado.

• **CPJ** organized 2 adult education classes in October, featuring Lou Ness on workforce housing in McHenry County, and Rob Mutert, discussing the mission of WARP Corps.

• **Coat Drive-** Coats, boots, mittens and hats were collected in November for the detained immigrants in Chicago. Over 100 items were delivered to the ICDI warehouse.

• **Matthew 25-**Our M25 team met with Ann Gaughn, the SPAN director at MCC to discuss working together with RCLPC. An M25 Summit was held in June at Westminster Presbyterian in DeKalb.

**Global Missions:**

• **Living Waters for the World-** Two teams were sent to Guatemala in February. They visited all 5 prior installation sites at Jerez, La Felicidad, El Chico (a solar installation), Santiago and Zacapa. A new site outside Guatemala City was visited and assessed. On May 20 the fundraiser Fiesta Agua Viva brought in over \$10,000. Patti West, a new



member of the team, and Mary Finch were trained at Clean Water University in Newark. Patti became an educator and Mary trained as an administrator. The January trip to the new site at Nueva Jerusalem was postponed, but the sustainability trip to Jerez, LaFelicidad and El Chico is still planned for January, 2024.

• **Care for Children Overseas-**

- **Kenya:** It was planned to host 15 members of our partner parish in Kenya, but only 3 were able to get visas. Those three visitors met with Presbytery at Stronghold and toured and spoke at several local churches.. Obadiah, our Kenyan partner from the Ngirine Parish reported that the dispensary we helped to fund had been relocated. We continue to collect Coins for Kenya, which provide funds to buy food for those in the drought and famine areas of Kenya.
- **Colombia:** We continued to support Loren , a student at the Colegio Americano of Apartado through her last year of high school. She is now entering the university to study law and political science. In June Cesar Carhuachin and his wife Dania came to preach and teach an adult education class after worship.
- **Fairhaven School** for the Developmentally Delayed in Alexandria, EgyptOrnaments that were handmade by the students were set up for display to be sold as a free will donation to support the school.
- **Fair Trade Gift Shop**-Popular items have been chocolate, hot chocolate mix, coffee, tea, cashews and olive oil from Palestine. Items are no longer being ordered from SERV. Instead, local items like honey are being offered, as well as suggestions to order from the Presbytery Giving Catalog.

We continue to support the PCUSA and Blackhawk Presbytery in the following ways:

- **Special Offerings:** One Great Hour of Sharing, Pentecost Offering, Peace and Global Witness Offering, and Christmas Joy Offering.
- **Blackhawk Presbytery:** We made and sent 50 school bags, 50 hygiene kits, and 10 disaster buckets to the Elgin warehouse in August.
- We are a Hunger Action Congregation

**Allocation of Funds:**

Every year the Mission Outreach Team allocates funds in our Mission budget to meet the needs of the local and global missions. See the Mission Giving Report for the list of organizations and agencies that received our designated Mission funds for 2023.

The Mission Outreach Team is grateful to the congregation for their generous response to the opportunities for service and stewardship in serving those in need.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Ellen Shine and Mary Finch, Mission Outreach Team

**2023 Designated Mission Fund Allocation (\$11,000)**

January	Living Waters of the World	\$1,000.
February	Keeping Families Covered	\$1,000
March	ICDI	\$1,000
April	NAMI	\$1,000
May	Clearbrook	\$1,000
June	CASA	\$1,000
July	Family health Partnership	\$1,000
August	Senior Care Volunteer Network	\$1,000
September	Kenya Partnership	\$1,000
October	Turning Point	\$750
November	Independence Health & Therapy	\$750
December	Good Samaritan Ministry	\$500

**MISSION GIVING REPORT 2023**

<b>2023 Budgeted Giving:</b>	
<b>Payments to Presbytery:</b>	
General Assembly Per Capita	\$1,911
Synod Per Capita	\$739
Blackhawk Presbytery Per Capita	\$5,498
Blackhawk Presbytery Mission Outreach	<u>\$10,000</u>
<b>Total to PCUSA</b>	<b>\$18,148</b>
<b>Designated Mission Fund allocations:</b>	
Living Waters of the World	\$1,000
Keeping Families Covered	\$1,000
ICDI	\$1,000
NAMI	\$1,000
Clearbrook	\$1,000
CASA	\$1,000
Family Health Partnership	\$1,000
Senior Care Volunteer Network	\$1,000
Kenya Partnership	\$1,000
Turning Point	\$750
Independence Health & Therapy	\$750
Good Samaritan Ministry	\$500
<b>Total Designated Mission Giving</b>	<b>\$11,000</b>

<b>2023 Individual Giving for Special Offerings and Needs (Non-Budgeted):</b>	
<b>Special Offerings to the PCUSA and other:</b>	
Christmas Joy Offering (from 2021)	\$1,146
One Great Hour of Sharing to Presbytery	\$1,555
Pentecost Offering to Presbytery (60%)	\$748
Youth Mission (40%)	\$499
Peacemaking Offering to Presbytery (75%)	\$840
CWS CROP Walk (25%)	\$185
<b>Total Special Offerings</b>	<b>\$4,973</b>
<b>Special Mission Projects in Our Community and Beyond:</b>	
Student Sponsorship of Students at Fairhaven School, Alexandria, Egypt	\$4,968
Care of Children Overseas (Colombia Student support)	\$435
Postage for CWS Kits (50 hygiene kits, 42 school kits, and 10 emergency buckets)	\$230
Supplies for CWS Kits and Buckets	\$1,013
CROP Walk donations from RCLPC (\$2,715 from RCPLC team donations)	\$372
Coins for Kenya	\$307
Home of the Sparrow Gift Cards	\$0
PADS – Hope Takes Action (Pioneer Center)	\$0
Tree of Life (Homeless Outreach supplies for Compassion for Campers)	\$500
Guatemala Staff Support	\$120
Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA)	\$0
SCCNW (Samaritan Counseling Center)	\$0
Lake County Veterans & Family	\$0
Covenant Network of Presbyterians	\$0
Donations for Youth Mission Homeless Outreach Project	priceless
Donations for Compassion for Campers Supplies	priceless
<b>Total Special Mission Projects Given to Community and Beyond</b>	<b>\$7,823</b>
<b>Special Mission Projects at RCLPC:</b>	
Souper Bowl of Caring donation to Woodstock Food Pantry	\$1,896
Living Waters Project Distribution for projects in Guatemala	\$32,163
Joy Angel Giving Tree gifts to Various Organizations	priceless
<b>Total Special Mission Projects</b>	<b>\$34,059</b>
<b>Cookie Walk Distributions in 2022 (from 2021 Cookie Walk):</b>	
\$1,713 to NAMI	
<b>TOTAL Budgeted Giving</b>	<b>\$29,148</b>
<b>TOTAL Donated Giving (over and above pledged dollars)</b>	<b>\$50,112</b>
<b>TOTAL GIVEN TO MISSION OUTREACH</b>	<b>\$79,260</b>

## **Compassion, Peace, and Justice Team Report for 2023**

In early 2023, CPJ continued its “themed” approach to meetings. But after a mid-year change in leadership, member attendance at meetings declined. A couple meetings were cancelled and the last two (via Zoom) only had 3 people involved so discussion turned to disbanding entirely, going on hiatus, or seeking to merge into the Mission Committee. All of these ideas are still under consideration.

But our members continued to learn and act on issues concerned with compassion and peace and justice.

- We continued to distribute PCUSA Action Alerts to interested congregants. We are grateful to our members and those in the congregation who showed support by responding to these.
- We again hosted a letter-writing event for Bread for the World.
- We again participated in Woodstock’s PrideFest.
- Members received training and then participated in a Guns to Gardens event at another local church.
- We organized the October Adult Education offerings.
- We lobbied the McHenry County Board via emails and phone calls about next year’s budget, in particular its support of the Mental Health Board
- Our \$150 budget was directed toward registration for PrideFest and support for the Guns to Gardens event.

## **Earth Care Team Report 2023**

The Earth Care Team is a sub-group of the Mission Team. RCLPC’s Policies and Procedures Manual describes earth care as both a moral and spiritual commitment, and as such, recognized as a central concern of the church and a focus for local and global mission, justice, and peacemaking. Earth Care Team’s responsibilities are to:

- evaluate our church’s current practices in caring for God’s earth through worship, education, facilities, and outreach in order to continue as an Earth Care Congregation in the Presbyterian Church (USA).
- suggest steps to help the church improve our care for creation.
- and promote ways to advocate for just environmental policies on a national level.

The congregation continued its commitment to caring for God’s earth with the twelfth consecutive year as a PC(USA) Earth Care Congregation. By continuing and expanding upon the earth-friendly actions RCLPC has been doing for years, we continue to be good stewards of God’s earth. Efforts in worship, education, and outreach, coupled with energy conservation, help to continue our dedication as an earth-conscious community of worshipers.

During 2023 as a church, we have:

- held annual Green Living Fair was in person on Sunday April 23, in Fellowship Hall
- researched Community Solar projects for the church at Session's request and signed the church onto MC Squared. This will lower energy costs going forward.
- maintained butterfly garden in the raised bed in the church field.
- begun preparations for a native plant area to the front and west of the glass doors.
- continued supporting and being supported by Faith in Place, an Illinois faith-based organization that offers environmental education, energy-saving workshops, and opportunities for advocacy.
- supported water conservation and purification through Living Waters for the World.
- recycled batteries placed in the collection container.
- maintained the Earth Care Team button on the church website with information about community events, photos, and green living tips. A Prayer for the Earth is always included.

Our appreciation goes to Session, Pastor John Dillon, Music Director Anthony Houston, Web Administrator Kim Stewart, the Building and Grounds team, and Wednesday Warriors for their support of our Earth Care efforts.

The Earth Care Team always welcomes new members. We meet as monthly as needed usually on a Wednesday at 2:00 p.m. and accomplish our goals with the support of the church's people and its teams. Thank you for your commitment to caring for God's good earth.

## **Treasurer's Report for 2023**

2023 was again a 'transition year' as we bid farewell to retiring Pastor Dillon and welcomed our new transitional Interim Pastor Nicole.

Financially, we ended up 2023 with a loss of \$(67,373) due primarily to the significant investment we made in our church building with repairs of \$190,000. Fortunately, we had \$122,000 in funds we had designated for our building plus the JC Button foundation we had cancelled in 2022. We did have to expense \$68,000 that exceeded these funds and fortunately we were able to pay that extra from our operating cash account.

Through the generous giving from all of you, we have been able both add back funds to our operating cash, as well as build back our funds available for Ongoing Maintenance to a balance of \$33,747 to be used for our future needs.

As you can see below, even with the building repairs, we were only \$(6,900) unfavorable to budgeted spend. This was a direct result of lower resource cost after Pastor Dillon retired and Pastor Nicole started. We maintained strong mission giving and outreach in line with our 2023 budgeted amounts. Thank you to everyone for your generosity.

The summarized financial results were as follows (all numbers rounded to the nearest \$100):

	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Budgeted</b>	<b>Variance</b>
<b>Income</b>	\$271,800	\$336,200	(\$64,400) Deficit
<b>Expense</b>	\$339,200	\$332,300	\$(6,900) Unfavorable
<b>Income Less Expense Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>\$(67,400)</b>	\$3,900	<b>\$(71,300)</b> Unfavorable

If you remove the cost of the much-needed building repair expenditure in 2023, we would have come very close to break-even. Our ability to save for those rainy days and rally by giving generously when those times occur is a testament to the RCLPC family!

Please remember that the details are available to any member who wishes to see them. I am always happy to review any of this with you.

Linda Peel - Treasurer

## Finance Team 2023 Report

The Finance Team responsibilities are:

- Track day to day finances and cash flow
- Prepare the Annual Budget
- Provide Audit Committee support
- Oversee Stewardship Team

The Finance Team meets monthly and discusses the status of RCLPC income and spending compared to the approved budget. Each month we provide a status of the financial position to the congregation and the Session. Copies of the financial reports are located in the church office copy room. Any member can review financial reports anytime. A copy of the 2023 yearend financial report is included here. We finished 2023 in the red with a \$67,373 deficit balance due primarily to the repair expense for the church building. Despite the size of the deficit, members provided help in absorbing the deficit and our Money Market Fund Balance is in good shape.

Each year the Finance Team reaches out to RCLPC teams for input for the next year budget. The information provided from each team is used to create the budget for Session review and approval. The Session approved the 2024 budget at the December 2023 Session Meeting. The Finance Team normally prepares a summary of the Pastor's Terms of Call for the Congregation approval at the January Annual Meeting. At this time we do not have a Call for the Pastor. A summary of the 2024 budget forecast is included.

Each year the Session calls for an audit review of the church finances. The audit team reviews the financial procedures, adherence to the financial procedures, and interviews the church Treasurer and Administrator. The audit team prepares a report of their finding and submits their report to the Finance Team who then submits the audit report to the Session for approval.

This process probably sounds dull and tedious. It is but the Finance Team is managing the financial assets of RCLPC and your generous contributions. We are pleased to serve you.

**Finance Team:** Lee Ekstrom (Chair), Linda Peel (Treasurer), Lynn Hoch, Jim Pracht, Al Popp, Steve Connell, Kim Stewart, and Laurie Jensen.

Ridgefield Crystal Lake Presbyterian

**Treasurer's Report by Account**

December of Fiscal Year 2023

Responsibility: All

**Fund: 01 - GENERAL FUND**

	December Actual	Year-to-date Actual	Annual Budget	Remaining Budget
<b>Income</b>				
<b>MEMBER INCOME // MEMBER INCOME</b>				
Contributing Member	19,490.61	251,852.39	163,783.00	-98,069.39
Additional Pledges	0.00	0.00	164,717.00	164,717.00
	19,490.61	251,852.39	328,500.00	66,647.61
<b>GENERAL INCOME // GENERAL INCOME</b>				
Loose Plate Income	328.00	2,253.00	2,500.00	247.00
	328.00	2,253.00	2,500.00	247.00
<b>CHURCH SCHOOL // CHURCH SCHOOL</b>				
Sunday School Income	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>RENT // RENT</b>				
Rent Income	0.00	350.00	200.00	-150.00
	0.00	350.00	200.00	-150.00
<b>INTEREST INCOME // INTEREST INCOME</b>				
Interest Income	332.58	4,731.48	500.00	-4,231.48
	332.58	4,731.48	500.00	-4,231.48
<b>SPECIAL OFF'RING // SPECIAL OFF'RING</b>				
Easter Offering	0.00	615.00	1,000.00	385.00
Christmas Offering	560.00	610.00	2,000.00	1,390.00
Special Offering/Events	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Wedding/Funerals	0.00	500.00	500.00	0.00
	560.00	1,725.00	3,500.00	1,775.00
<b>OTHER INCOME // OTHER INCOME</b>				
Invest. Grade Certificate	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Other Income	0.00	903.24	1,000.00	96.76
Dedicated Funds Released	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	0.00	903.24	1,000.00	96.76
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>20,711.19</b>	<b>271,815.11</b>	<b>338,200.00</b>	<b>64,384.89</b>

**Expense**

**MANAGING // Personnel (Salary)**

Pastor	5,500.00	29,472.56	39,944.00	10,471.44
Coord/Child&FamMinistries	5,000.00	23,700.00	20,400.00	-3,300.00
Administrative Assistant	1,666.66	19,999.92	20,000.00	0.08
Music Director	1,955.00	23,460.00	23,460.00	0.00
Organist	0.00	0.00	6,000.00	6,000.00
Accompanist	437.76	5,253.12	5,253.00	-0.12
Music Ministry Assistant	442.00	5,304.00	5,304.00	0.00
Custodian	799.00	9,588.00	9,589.00	1.00
	15,800.42	116,777.60	129,950.00	13,172.40

**MANAGING // Personnel (Benefits)**

Cell Phones	0.00	200.00	600.00	400.00
Pastor's Housing Allow.	2,000.00	26,512.00	42,024.00	15,512.00
Pastors Pension & Medical	5,850.00	23,862.06	36,780.00	12,917.94
Pastor's Medical CoPay	0.00	3,481.04	6,500.00	3,018.96



Ridgefield Crystal Lake Presbyterian

**Treasurer's Report by Account**

December of Fiscal Year 2023

Responsibility: All

**Fund: 01 - GENERAL FUND**

	December Actual	Year-to-date Actual	Annual Budget	Remaining Budget
Pastor's Prof. Expenses	0.00	330.23	2,000.00	1,669.77
Pastor's Sec. Sec. Allow.	1,147.50	4,283.00	6,271.00	1,988.00
Pastor's Continuing Ed	0.00	41.12	1,500.00	1,458.88
Staff Continuing Educ.	0.00	54.51	800.00	745.49
	<b>8,997.50</b>	<b>58,763.06</b>	<b>96,475.00</b>	<b>37,711.04</b>
<b>MANAGING // Personnel (Expenses)</b>				
FICA Payroll Tax Expense	638.64	5,412.92	5,611.00	198.08
MEDICARE Pay. Tax Expense	149.37	1,265.93	1,312.00	46.07
	<b>788.01</b>	<b>6,678.85</b>	<b>6,923.00</b>	<b>244.15</b>
<b>MANAGING // Administration</b>				
Office Supplies	0.00	370.13	600.00	229.87
Computer Supplies	0.00	188.21	200.00	11.79
Computer Tech. Support	0.00	674.74	700.00	25.26
Business Exp.- Admin.	564.00	5,318.20	6,000.00	681.80
Background Checks	0.00	327.75	600.00	272.25
Postage	66.00	584.95	500.00	-84.95
Church Cleaning Supplies	0.00	505.95	500.00	-5.95
Copy Machine Maintenance	146.57	1,743.73	2,000.00	256.27
Offering Envelopes	0.00	187.99	200.00	12.01
Session Expenses	0.00	332.60	500.00	167.40
	<b>776.57</b>	<b>10,234.25</b>	<b>11,800.00</b>	<b>1,565.75</b>
<b>MANAGING // Property</b>				
General Maintenance	130.22	982.68	1,500.00	517.32
HVAC Contract	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Extermin. Contract	70.00	840.00	840.00	0.00
Fire Alarm & Extinguisher	240.00	2,209.94	2,000.00	-209.94
Garbage Disposal	840.13	4,535.38	3,750.00	-785.38
Grounds Maintenance	0.00	1,863.39	2,500.00	636.61
Snow Removal	840.00	4,410.00	3,750.00	-660.00
Carpet Cleaning	0.00	0.00	800.00	800.00
Repairs/Replacement	179.73	66,040.33	3,000.00	-63,040.33
	<b>2,300.08</b>	<b>80,881.72</b>	<b>18,160.00</b>	<b>-62,701.72</b>
<b>MANAGING // Utilities</b>				
Natural Gas	685.40	6,628.35	6,300.00	-328.35
Electricity	389.71	4,065.80	4,000.00	-65.80
Telephone	0.00	2,798.32	1,550.00	-1,248.32
	<b>1,075.11</b>	<b>13,492.47</b>	<b>11,850.00</b>	<b>-1,642.47</b>
<b>MANAGING // Insur. &amp; Taxes</b>				
Building Insurance	634.06	7,632.90	7,122.00	-510.90
Worker's Compensation	99.45	984.80	1,677.00	692.20
	<b>733.51</b>	<b>8,617.70</b>	<b>8,799.00</b>	<b>181.30</b>
<b>INVITING // Outreach</b>				
Community Awareness	0.00	0.00	250.00	250.00
Website Hosting	0.00	0.00	180.00	180.00
Website Site Support	0.00	180.00	1,500.00	1,320.00
	<b>0.00</b>	<b>180.00</b>	<b>1,930.00</b>	<b>1,750.00</b>
<b>INVITING // Worship</b>				
Guest Preacher	0.00	3,140.15	1,200.00	-1,940.15
Worship Suppl & Resources	315.82	1,481.01	1,800.00	118.99

Ridgefield Crystal Lake Presbyterian

**Treasurer's Report by Account**

December of Fiscal Year 2023

Responsibility: All

**Fund: 01 - GENERAL FUND**

	December Actual	Year-to-date Actual	Annual Budget	Remaining Budget
Guest Musician Support	2,100.00	4,200.00	2,700.00	-1,500.00
	2,415.82	8,821.16	5,500.00	-3,321.16
<b>INVITING // Music</b>				
Music for Worship	0.00	0.00	500.00	500.00
Music Licensing Fees	0.00	1,719.00	2,000.00	281.00
Music Equip Maintenance	0.00	360.00	1,200.00	840.00
	0.00	2,079.00	3,700.00	1,621.00
<b>REACHING OUT // Mission</b>				
Mission Misc Expenses	0.00	0.00	750.00	750.00
CPJ Team	0.00	100.00	150.00	50.00
Earth Care Team	0.00	97.74	400.00	302.26
Mission Outreach	500.00	11,000.00	11,000.00	0.00
GA Per Capita	159.00	1,911.00	1,911.00	0.00
Synod Per Capita	81.58	738.96	739.00	0.04
Presbytery Per Capita	458.17	5,498.04	5,498.00	-0.04
Presbytery Mission	833.33	9,999.96	10,000.00	0.04
	2,012.08	29,345.70	30,448.00	1,102.30
<b>LEARNING // Caring</b>				
General Deacon Expenses	0.00	385.46	500.00	114.54
Family Care	75.00	75.00	300.00	225.00
	75.00	460.46	800.00	339.54
<b>LEARNING // Fellowship</b>				
General Fellowship	512.17	1,091.59	1,800.00	708.41
	512.17	1,091.59	1,800.00	708.41
<b>LEARNING // Children</b>				
S.S. Curriculum/Children	0.00	337.68	300.00	-37.68
Family Programming	14.17	188.00	200.00	12.00
	14.17	525.68	500.00	-25.68
<b>LEARNING // Youth</b>				
High School Youth Group	0.00	170.01	1,200.00	1,029.99
Middle School Youth Group	12.72	137.87	800.00	662.13
Confirmation Class	0.00	55.44	250.00	194.56
	12.72	363.32	2,250.00	1,886.68
<b>LEARNING // Adults</b>				
Adult Education	0.00	81.00	200.00	119.00
Small Group Ministry	0.00	75.59	100.00	24.41
	0.00	156.59	300.00	143.41
<b>LEARNING // General Education</b>				
Special Events	12.99	552.94	700.00	147.06
S.S. Supplies	0.00	14.99	200.00	185.01
Bibles	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00
College Age Outreach	100.00	100.00	100.00	0.00
	112.99	717.93	1,050.00	332.07
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>35,626.15</b>	<b>339,187.98</b>	<b>332,255.00</b>	<b>-6,932.98</b>
<b>Income Less Expense</b>	<b>-14,914.96</b>	<b>-67,372.87</b>	<b>3,945.00</b>	<b>71,317.87</b>

## FINANCIAL FORECAST 2024

Pledging Member	\$173,880
Non-Pledging Member	\$154,620
Subtotal Member	\$328,500
Loose Plate	\$2,500
Rent	\$200
Interest	\$500
Special Offering	\$3,500
Other Income	\$1,000
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$336,200</b>

### FORECAST EXPENSES

Salaries	\$183,186
Benefits	\$51,080
Payroll Taxes	\$6,713
Administration	\$15,002
Property	\$21,900
Utilities	\$11,800
Insurance	\$10,033
Communications	\$750
Worship	\$1,850
Music	\$7,350
Mission	\$30,084
Caring/Fellowship	\$2,600
Education & Youth	\$4,200
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$346,548</b>

**Interim Pastor's Terms of Employment  
November 1, 2023 through October 31, 2024**

The Session approves the Terms of Employment for interim pastors on a contractual yearly basis. The Contractual Terms of Call for Pastor Nicole Melara are:

	<u><b>2023-2024</b></u>
Effective Salary (Salary plus Housing allowance)	\$90,000
Pension	\$9,000
Medical	\$26,100
Medical CoPay	\$4,200
Professional Expenses	\$3,000
Continuing Ed	\$1,500
SECA Offset	<u>\$6,480</u>
	\$140,280