



CONNECTING OUR GCC COMMUNITY SINCE 1941

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## STORIES OF BELONGING

When people talk about why they keep coming back to Glenview Community Church, they often don't start with theology or programs or buildings. More often than not, they talk about people. They talk about feeling seen, welcomed, connected. They talk about belonging.

This year, we've set out to collect and celebrate "stories of belonging" from within our own congregation. These stories are already among us, woven into the fabric of our life together. People find belonging at GCC in all kinds of ways—through friendships, through worship, through service, through being known and cared for. And it's that sense of belonging—to one another and to God—that inspires us to show up, pitch in, offer our gifts, and grow in faith.

While our central focus as a church is connecting to God, I believe we most often experience that connection in community. We encounter God through one another—in worship, in meals, in service, in laughter, in prayer. Church isn't just something we attend. It's something we belong to.

When we started inviting people to reflect on their experiences of belonging, I was moved by how many were eager to share. Each person's story is unique. Some have been part of GCC their entire lives—growing up in the church, then raising families here, rooted in generations of connection. Others are brand new—just discovering this community and already finding it to be a place of welcome and meaning. All of these stories matter. Each one adds to the larger picture of who we are.

This story has caused me to reflect on my own story of belonging here. As someone on staff, my path is a little different, but no less personal. I came to GCC as a pastoral resident—a short-term, two-year appointment meant to be a time of learning and growth. And yet, somewhere along the way, I realized I wasn't just working at a church—I was belonging to one.

For me, belonging looks like being part of a community where I can be fully myself—where I don't have to pretend or shrink or perform. It's a place where honesty is welcomed, where vulnerability is honored, and where showing up just as you are is enough.

I experience belonging here in so many ways. I feel it when we surround one another during life's milestones—through grief, loss, and celebration. I feel it during worship—when the choir sings something beautiful, when a sermon resonates deeply, when the congregation lifts their voices in song or prayer. I especially love when different voices take the stage to read scripture or lead prayers. Worship that reflects the many voices of our community reminds me of what it means to belong.

I also see belonging when we welcome new people—when someone walks in the door for the first time and feels at home. I love hearing folks say they feel genuinely welcomed, that worship moved them, that this church feels like a place they could grow. These are the beginnings of new stories of belonging—and they matter just as much as the stories rooted in decades.

Of course, I must feel a strong sense of belonging here—because through our mutual discernment, we've decided that I will continue on as Associate Minister beyond my original two-year term. I am so grateful for the opportunity to stay, to continue ministering among you, and to keep building this community of faith together.

As I prepare for this new chapter in my ministry, I find myself reflecting even more on what it means to belong. What does it mean for me to be called to this place in this time? How can I continue to nurture my own connection to this community and to God? And how can we, together, keep creating space where others can experience the joy of belonging too?

I hope you'll take some time this fall to reflect on your own story of belonging. What first brought you to GCC? What keeps you here? When have you felt most connected, most seen, most "at home" in this community? How might you contribute to helping others feel that same sense of belonging?



# September Kickoff!

What's New & What's Next

**SAVE THE DATE**

**Rally Day!  
Sunday,  
September 7**

Kickoff the “church year” and celebrate with a barbeque after church on the South lawn! All are welcome!

Scan or click here to help us get ready for Rally Day!

[Click here](#)

**Youth Programs**  
such as Puppets, Youth Group, and Children’s Choir will kick off in September! Keep an eye out for how to get involved!

**Godly Play**  
will resume on Rally Day!  
Be sure to check out our newly redone Godly Play Room and Nursery!



**Pathways:**

A Journey in Faith~  
GCC Middle School &  
Confirmation Program

This new Faith Formation program will kick off on Rally Day and meet during 10am worship. (Students will start in the sanctuary at 10am.)

**Amos Speakers Forum**  
will kick off in September! Keep an eye out for this Fall’s line up!

**New Spiritual Life Teams**  
will launch in September!

**Welcoming our New Choir Director!**  
Kate will begin working with us mid-August and will be part of worship in September!

***There are so many ways to get involved this Fall!  
We can’t wait to kick off this new year with you all!***

**GLENVIEW**  
FIND YOUR **COMMUNITY**  
**CHURCH**

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Glenview, IL 60025-2897  
Phone: (847) 724-2210  
Web: gccucc.org  
Facebook: facebook.com/  
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**SENIOR MINISTER**

Rev. Dr. James Matarazzo, Jr.

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*Vétheuil in Summer, 1880 by Claude Monet*