



OUR HOPE IN THE WILDERNESS

*O God, You are my God; early will I seek You;
My soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You
In a dry and thirsty land where there is no water.*
-Psalm 63:1

I have been asked, in a few different ways over the past several weeks, how—and if—I have hope. I do have hope. But I can't always articulate why.

My faith gives me hope. Even when the world feels challenging, even when heavy things come our way, something about my faith allows me to cling to hope.

I also know that hope can co-exist with other states of being and emotions. I can be sad and have hope. I can be angry and have hope. I can be anxious, lonely, worried, confused, frustrated, impatient—and also have hope. These complex emotions can exist at the same time as our holding onto hope. Hope, like a candle that cannot be extinguished, continues burning faithfully, despite the storms that whirl around it.

The hope that I have isn't blind. The hope we can choose isn't ignorant or avoidant. The hope I carry comes from real experiences of God and Spirit in my life. These days, my hope also comes from the compassion, courage, persistence, and love I witness in friends, colleagues, and family members. When I see people moving with kindness and love—in big and small ways—I am encouraged, and my hope is renewed.

Without hope, we cannot move forward. So, if you are in need of some hope, look around. Find brave people doing loving work. Take a deep breath, knowing that God is moving through so many different avenues. God is love. God is the hands and feet of those doing loving work. I wonder if, these days, this might be a source of our hope.

This month begins the journey of Lent—a seven-week season of preparation for Easter, when we remember and celebrate the promise of resurrection. Lent can be a season of self-reflection, wrestling with faith, big questions, and crying out, like the psalmist: “O God, You are my God; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water.”

Desperation is not typically thought of as “beautiful.” Yet there is something about this psalm that makes desperation holy. What would it look like for us, in this season, to turn toward God desperately—longing for God to quench our thirst in a land that feels dry and desolate? This longing would be passionate and wholehearted. It might even look like action: running, moving, actively pursuing God's presence in our lives, actively looking for signs of hope.

I wonder if this Lent we might lean into the God who meets us in the wilderness and offers us hope. I wonder if we might find that in leaning in that, we are not left desperate. God shows up. God has not deserted us. God is our oasis in the wilderness—quenching our thirst, nourishing us for the work of love.

Let us be people who long for God like those thirsty in the desert for water. Let us be open to revelations of hope—present to the loving and courageous acts around us as God at work. And perhaps, let us join in those loving acts. Wishing us all a meaningful, hopeful, and passionate Lenten season.

Rev. Abigail

CHRISTMAS EVE AT GCC!

This past December, more than 700 people passed through our doors over the course of three Christmas Eve services at GCC.

Our 4:00 pm service brought together people of all ages to retell the Christmas story, featuring our intergenerational choir, a jazz trio, and the decorating of our sanctuary trees with paper stars. On those stars, worshipers wrote where they see Christ’s light shining in the world.

Our 8:00 pm service featured the GCC Chancel Choir, lifting our spirits through music and proclamation.

Our 11:00 pm service was a candlelit service with communion, accompanied by a beautiful harpist, offering a quiet and holy close to the night.

Together, the evening was a joyful and bright celebration of Christ’s birth and of the light of Christ among us. Deep thanks to the many people who shared their time, talents, and care to make this sacred night possible at GCC.



GCC CELEBRATES THE LEGACY OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

A huge thank you to everyone who helped make Martin Luther King Day of Service a day of fellowship and outreach to those in need. Approximately 100 people participated Monday morning, including 30 volunteers who made sure that everything went smoothly.

During the morning we:

- Made 120 sandwiches, which were delivered to the Night Ministry on Tuesday
- Put together 250 hygiene kits for the Grace Network
- Made 20 dog and cat blankets for Heartland Animal Shelter
- Wrote 62 letters of encouragement to LGBTQ individuals
- Repaired four window screens for GCC
- Created a Giant Poster celebrating Dr. King's legacy - You can admire it in the Commons
- Learned details about Martin Luther King's non-violent actions for Voting Rights, to fight poverty and segregation,
- and to protest for peaceful resolutions to international conflict.
- Learned how we can take actions to realize our dreams for a better world; Participants dreams can be viewed in the Commons

Also, many thanks to Paul Bauerschmidt and the Boy Scouts of Troop 156, who dismantled and stored GCC's Christmas Trees and Wreaths and put together the stage for tee January 25th Puppet Show.

We also thank the Women's Association and many members of the congregation who supported us with donations of food for Night Ministry lunches and money for hygiene kit supplies. It felt good working together to make a difference for our neighbors.

The Congregational Life Ministry
The Outreach Ministry



GCC YOUTH PUPPET SHOW

The GCC Puppet Team consists of Middle and High School students with adult co-conspirators. We rehearse on Sunday mornings and perform to the Church School two times per year and to the full church community in the Sanctuary on an annual basis.

On Sunday, January 25, the puppeteers brought “Dudley’s Dream” to the Sanctuary. Poor Dudley gets woken from a deep sleep by a very determined seeker of a lost coin, only to be thrown, without warning, into a game show. After impressing the audience with his knowledge of science, he fails to secure the Top Secret “Oh-I-Wish-I-Could-Tell-You-What-It-Is” Super Duper Bonus Surprise Prize because he has never heard of the Prodigal Son. Luckily, his Fairy Game Show Coach puts him right by telling him the story, complete with important details including the prodigal’s venture into pork belly futures. Dudley finds out that the Prodigal Son has a loving home waiting for him even when he thinks all is lost (though he should purchase some hair conditioner for his older brother). Dudley then watches Super Samaritan and Bible Boy rescue the world from manic racers; but has to be resuscitated with the plunger of life after a nasty encounter with a camera. The two rescue heroes are shocked to find out that Dudley has never heard of the Good Samaritan this has to be rectified more next episode....and where IS Dudley’s bed?

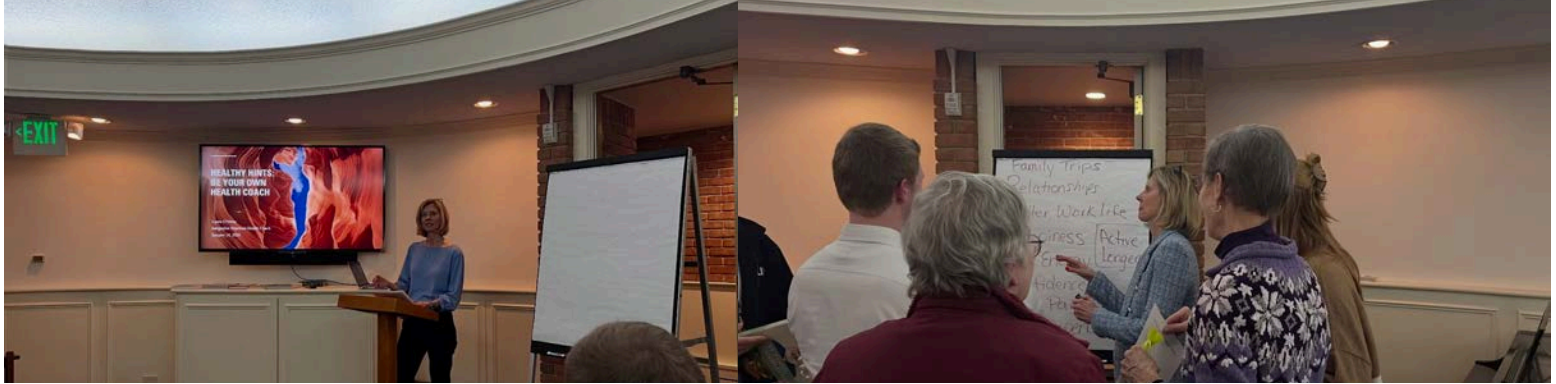
All in a day’s work for the puppet crew.

New members always welcome – all rehearsals powered by donuts.



JANUARY SPEAKER'S FORUM

This month at our Speaker's Forum, we welcomed our very own Laura O'Mera for a thoughtful and engaging presentation titled "Healthy Hints: Be Your Own Health Coach." Laura, a health coach, shared practical tools and encouragement to help us better understand our bodies, build healthy habits, and take an active role in our own wellness. We're grateful for her insight and for the meaningful conversations that followed. Thank you to everyone who joined us!



MENS MINISTRY BREAKFAST

The Men's Ministry braved the cold and had a great time warming up with coffee and breakfast at Jasper's on Saturday January 24 morning. Look for details about a service project we will do as a team later this Spring.



CAMPANELLA CHILDRENS CHOIR IN WORSHIP

We were reminded that worship comes in many voices. The Campanella Children's Choir shared their gifts with our congregation. We are grateful for the beauty and spirit they brought to our service.



Glenview Community Church
Women's Retreat

March 7-8, 2026

RENEWED

THE WELL SPIRITUALITY CENTER
LA GRANGE PARK, IL

Total Cost : \$150
Commuter Cost : \$70
Scholarships available

For questions or to sign up, contact Rev. Abigail
Sign up and submit full payment by February 13th!

FIND YOUR GLENVIEW
COMMUNITY CHURCH

JOIN CONGREGATION HAKAFA &
GLENVIEW COMMUNITY CHURCH

FOR

JEWISH-CHRISTIAN
BIBLE STUDY

GENESIS | בְּרֵאשִׁית | BERESHIT



Thursdays at 4 PM
February 5 - March 26, 2026
Glenview Community Church



CONGREGATION
HAKAFA

www.hakafa.org



www.gccucc.org

Passages

Concert For Peace

SUNDAY, MARCH 1, 2026 • 3:00 PM



A free-will offering will be collected
to benefit Building Peaceful Bridges.
www.buildingpeacefulbridges.org

1000 ELM STREET
GLENVIEW, IL 60025
WWW.GCCUCC.ORG

FIND YOUR GLENVIEW
COMMUNITY CHURCH

ALL Are
Welcomed To
**BOARDS
+BITES**

An intergenerational
potluck and
board game night!

SUN. MARCH 15
4pm-6pm

Bring a dish to share and
some games to play!

People of all ages are encouraged to join us for
this fun potluck event.
Table games will be provided but feel free to bring
your favorites from home as well!

Glenview Community Church-1000 Elm Street, Glenview, IL

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

SENIOR MINISTER

Rev. Dr. James Matarazzo, Jr.

ASSOCIATE MINISTER

Rev. Abigail Lutz

Save the Date

**Scenes From An
Italian Restaurant**

FRIDAY, MAY 8 • 6:00 PM
GCC COMMONS

Italian Dining
*With Entertainment by GCC Musicians
To Benefit the Friends of Music Fund*