

THE BROADCASTER

CONNECTING OUR GCC COMMUNITY SINCE 1941

December, 2025
VOLUME 83 NUMBER 12

THE RIGHT TO JOY AND HOPE IN THE NEW YEAR



“New Year Magical Forest” by Oleg Gapeenko

You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.
-Psalm 16:11 (NKJV)

The Year 2025 has been a year like no other. There have been massive changes in federal government policy affecting millions of people, including approximately 14 million persons who are either undocumented or otherwise do not have the legal right to reside in the United States.[1] The scenes of people being rounded up have shocked the conscience of people of all political persuasions. Many of those imprisoned or deported have lived in this country for decades, have paid taxes, and have no criminal record. According to a recent report, 73% of those detained or deported have no criminal record.[2] The past year has been one of political violence including the assassinations of Charlie Kirk, Melissa Hortman and her husband, and two Israeli Embassy staffers.

An arsonist attempted to burn down the Pennsylvania Governor's Mansion while Governor Josh Shapiro and his family were inside, having just celebrated the first night of Passover.

On the world stage, things have been disastrous. The Gaza Strip has been destroyed causing horrific suffering, and the bombings have not fully stopped. The fratricidal war between Russia and Ukraine rages on in its fourth year, although the conflict began 11 years ago when Russia annexed the Crimea. Taiwan is under an ever-growing threat of invasion by China.

The Year 2026 has not started with rejoicing. On January 3, 2026, the United States military invaded Venezuela, capturing president Nicolás Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores who are now imprisoned in Brooklyn, New York. The president stated that the U.S. would govern Venezuela temporarily. And on January 7, 2026, Renée Nicole Macklin Good, a 37-year-old U.S. citizen and a mother of three children, was fatally shot by an ICE agent in Minneapolis.

With so many tragedies and perils in our nation and the world, do we have a right to joy and hope in the new year? The Christian answer is a resounding yes. Saint Paul exhorts us, from his prison cell, to "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again, I say, Rejoice!" (Phil. 4:4 KJV) We Christians are the heirs of the Victorious Christ who has defeated sin, death, and evil. We are Easter people.

In April 1999, the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, Basil Hume (1923-1999), the head of the Catholic Church in England and Wales, discovered he had terminal cancer. Days later, he was walking inside London's Westminster Cathedral (not to be confused with Westminster Abbey). He came across a Franciscan friar whom he knew well. He told the friar: "Please don't tell anyone, but I'm dying." The friar, a holy man, responded with a smile and said, "But that's wonderful! Can I go with you?" Cardinal Hume later wrote, "That was the right answer." Indeed, the Franciscan friar's strong faith in eternal life turned a terminal diagnosis into momentary rejoicing. I am rather certain I could not respond the way the Franciscan did. I wish I could! For this holy man, death is the doorway to unimaginable joy – to the fullness of life, something we do not have here on earth.

We must remember that the joy of the Christmas story is followed immediately by tragedy. The infant Jesus, Mary, and Joseph are forced to flee to Egypt as refugees to escape the slaughter of the innocents by King Herod. Jesus was born into a violent world, a world when life for almost everyone was short and brutal. Jesus witnessed violence his entire life: he saw slaves and beggars everywhere; he saw random cruelty; and he lived in poverty. In Roman Judea, there was rampant discrimination against various social groups, such as the Samaritans. And Christ's earthly life ended on a crucifix. Yet, he speaks to us of abundant life, joy, love, mercy, and peace. And he vindicates his gospel at his resurrection. So, yes, we have a right to joy and hope in this life, here and now. And if we have a job to do, it is to enable others to have joy and hope as well, like that friar did for the archbishop in 1999.

The author and poet T.S. Eliot (1888-1965) was born in St Louis, Missouri, and attended Harvard University. He was raised as a Unitarian. He later settled in London and became British by choice in 1927. In the same year, he converted to Anglicanism joining the Church of England. He identified as an Anglo-Catholic, favoring the Anglican variant known for "smells and bells" (incense and high ritual). He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1948. Eliot was an unusual man, and his life was at times unhappy, but he was a master of words. He reminds us: "For last year's words belong to last year's language and next year's words await another voice." [3] May the voice of 2026 be a good one.

I wish you all a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year – filled with joy and hope!

See you in church,
Jim

Rev. Dr. James Matarazzo
Senior Minister

[1] Pew Research Center, Washington, DC

[2] Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC), Syracuse University's Immigration Project

[3] T.S. Eliot, "Little Gidding" in *Four Quartets* (Chicago: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1943).

GCC YOUTH PUPPET SHOW

The GCC Puppet Team will be returning to the sanctuary for the January 25 service. They will be presenting a new script which involves a long dream sequence. The banter is zany and fast-paced! In the Prodigal Son, the oldest son just wants some hair conditioner. In the Good Samaritan, Bible Boy gushes a steady stream of bible verses. Guaranteed to be fun and maybe a little educational Find out what the word “prodigal” means (if you do not know).



TOY-FUL CELEBRATION

A Toy-ful Celebration Holiday Concert filled our sanctuary with music, joy, and generosity! The choir shared a beautiful evening of holiday songs while our community donated toys to support the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots program. Thank you to everyone who attended, sang, and gave so generously. Your kindness will brighten Christmas for children in need.



DECEMBER SPEAKER'S FORUM

Thank you for joining us! We had a wonderful evening at the GCC Speakers Forum for “Deck the Halls with DIY: Holiday Decorating & Floral Magic.” Sally Thuresson shared beautiful, creative ways to bring warmth and holiday cheer into our homes this season. It was an inspiring night of ideas, community, and festive fun!



YOUTH GROUP CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

Our Youth Group celebrated the season with a fun-filled holiday party on Sunday, December 14, featuring laughter, friendly competition, and plenty of holiday spirit. They enjoyed creative games like Musical Candy Canes, Ornament Tic-Tac-Toe, and a fast-paced Race the Clock challenge where we hurried to sort ornaments before time ran out. The evening also included festive foods and music and began with a time of prayer as our youth lifted one another up while preparing for finals and tests before the upcoming winter break.



GCCNS BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

The preschool hosted their beloved Santa Breakfast. With breakfast foods donated from local vendors, crafts, games, hot cocoa and Santa himself, it was a wonderful morning for all who attended!



GCC ADVENT/CHRISTMAS 2025



GETTING INVOLVED

MAKE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY

Glenview Community Church is sponsoring a Martin Luther King Day of Service on January 19, 2026 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. We invite you to celebrate the legacy of Dr. King by engaging in service projects that benefit local non-profits. These include:

- making sandwiches for **The Night Ministry**
- assembling hygiene kits for **The Grace Network**
- making pet blankets and toys for the **Heartland Animal Shelter**
- sending thank you notes to Glenview first-responders
- sending notes of encouragement to LGBTQ individuals through the **Pinto Project** (They sponsor the Buffalo Grove Pride Parade).

Participants can drop in as it fits their schedules and can participate in multiple projects. We will also run short videos about Martin Luther King's life, geared toward different age groups. Glenview Community Church is located at 1000 Elm Street, Glenview, Illinois 60025. Ample parking is available in our West parking lot and this is a free event.



HYGIENE KIT SUPPLIES

Help us prepare for Martin Luther King Day of Service on January 19! We will be assembling hygiene kits for **The Grace Network**, which works with over 150 schools in Chicago to support thousands of students facing hygiene insecurity. The network's school partners stock care closets full of health and hygiene items to ensure students always have access to everyday necessities.

You can help by making a monetary donation to GCC with MLK Day Kits on the check memo line or in the electronic donation form comments section. **The Grace Network** will purchase supplies from wholesalers and deliver them to us on January 19. Please NO hygiene items from home or from travels. Donations will be accepted from January 1 through January 15. And, of course, please join us on January 19 to assemble the kits!



JANUARY SPEAKER'S FORUM

You've heard WHAT TO DO and WHY, so how do you MAKE IT HAPPEN FOR YOURSELF? Hear about the health basics, gain resources and learn how to meet your unique health goals to ultimately transform your life! You have one life to live - if you have your health, you CAN have it all. Join us Wednesday, January 14 at 7 p.m. Our speaker will be GCC member, Laura O'Mera, Integrated, Nutrition Life Coach.

A JUST HARVEST

Please consider volunteering to serve lunch from 11-2:30 at **A Just Harvest** this winter. **A Just Harvest** needs teams of people to serve lunch at their site in Rogers Park, where they fight poverty and hunger by providing nutritious food daily to those in need. GCC volunteers will work on the first and third weeks of the month. A volunteer team can be made up of two GCC members, a member and family member or neighborhood friend, 2 members of Men's Ministry or a Women's Association chapter, or GCC youth, if they are accompanied by an adult supervisor/driver. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Betsy Martin at 847-562-6166 or betsywisemartin@att.net. We will sign you up for a date that fits your schedule and send you the information you need to volunteer.

MID-WINTER CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The Glenview Community Church Midwinter Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 25, 2026, immediately following the worship service in the church sanctuary. The agenda is as follows:

- Approval of the Minutes of the May 18, 2025, Annual Congregational Meeting
- Receipt of the Clerk's Report
- Senior Minister's Update
- Associate Minister's Update
- Mission Giving Report
- Treasurer's Report
- Adoption of the 2026 Budget

This notice constitutes the official call to meeting. In accordance with the church's constitution, no other business shall be transacted. 50 members need to be present to establish a quorum. Please plan to attend!

Sheryl Long
Church Clerk

Health Ministry: The Health Ministry prepares health related articles for the Broadcaster as well as providing resources to related services. An example would be the mental health hotline information posted throughout the church.

Social Events: Congressional Life has hosted a number of fun events around or community. Some of the events we've hosted include trivia night at a local bar, Chicago Dogs baseball games and local theater shows. Please let us know if you would like to host an event.

We appreciate all of the volunteers and other ministries for their help. If you are interested in getting involved in our projects, or have ideas for new projects, please reach out.

Terri Morgan
Congregational Life Ministry
Terrimorgan922@gmail.com

MODERATOR MENTIONS

Throughout the month of December, we celebrated the season with friends and family, with many of us enjoying the festive worship services as well as activities sponsored by various groups within GCC. Joyfulness, kindness, and a sense of belonging abounded. Behind the scenes, the Leadership Council reviewed a preliminary draft of our 2026 budget and, as of December 9, we were still a ways off from our goal. The annual budget covers the operating expenses for the church (missions, repairs & maintenance, office needs, utilities, insurance, staff wages & benefits, and a few of the activities sponsored by our 5 lay ministries), ensuring that the building is clean, comfortable, and safe for us to use. The operating budget does not cover capital projects, those larger projects that are not part of our annual expenses but periodically need to be addressed, and we ask for additional financial help when we plan that work. The operating budget is based on the amount of money that we anticipate bringing into the church over the course of year. About 80% of the budget is funded by your pledges, which is why pledging is so important – it allows us to plan more effectively.

During my adult years at GCC, I have watched our finance team work with ministries, committees, and board leaders to trim the fat and reduce spending again and again and they have done an amazing job. But tightening our belts is not enough. Operating costs keep rising, just as your utility bills and grocery bills have risen in your own homes. We often forget this and just check the box to keep our pledge the same from one year to the next. If you have the means to do so, please consider increasing your pledge. Let's give the church a raise to ensure we can continue to meet the spiritual and social needs of our church family and those we serve.

For those of you who give your time and talent to our beautiful community, I thank you from the bottom of my heart. For those of you who want to pledge but don't have the means to do so, I get it. That was me for many years. Every dollar counts so if you can only give a little, it will still make a difference.

Taking care of our church home is everyone's responsibility and we each contribute to the health and wellbeing of the church.

Laura Heyser, Moderator

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CHILI COOKOFF

The chili cookoff is on February 1. More details to come in the near future.

WOMEN'S RETREAT

2026 Women's Retreat "Renewed"

March 7-8

The Well Spirituality Center, La Grange Park, IL

Women of GCC are encouraged to join us on this year's retreat! This year's retreat will focus on the many ways our faith, spiritual lives, and specifically prayer, can bring us a sense of renewal! The weekend will be filled with an introduction to diverse prayer practices including yoga, coloring prayer, meditation, communal prayers, and more! As always, this retreat will also be a time of community building and connection with others at GCC! For more details and to register now, scan this QR Code



Jewish-Christian Bible Study

In partnership with Congregation Hakafa of Glencoe, GCC will host an interfaith Bible Study co-led by Rabbi Bruce Elder and Rev. Jim Matarazzo. This will take place every Thursday evening at 4 p.m. in the Commons, starting on February 5 and ending on March 26, 2026.

GLENVIEW
FIND YOUR **COMMUNITY**
CHURCH

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SENIOR MINISTER

Rev. Dr. James Matarazzo, Jr.

ASSOCIATE MINISTER

Rev. Abigail Lutz

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"Road to Versailles at Louveciennes" 1869, by Camille Pissarro