

THE BOARD OF DEACONS 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

“Exhibit within the church and before the world the exemplary moral authority of sympathy, witness, and service after the example of Jesus Christ.”

The ministry of deacon, as set forth in Scripture, is one of compassion, witness, and service, sharing in the redeeming love of Jesus Christ for the poor, the hungry, the sick, the lost, the friendless, the oppressed, those burdened by unjust policies or structures, or anyone in distress. Persons of spiritual character, honest repute, exemplary lives, brotherly and sisterly love, sincere compassion, and sound judgment should be chosen for this ministry. (The PC(USA) Book of Order. (G-2.0201)

Class of 2024	Class of 2025	Class of 2026
Beverly Edwards	Amy Bowerman	Nancy Atkinson
Norma Bentley	Linda Clark	Elaine Doran
Deanna McDonnell	Kathy Hollowell	Sarah Ramirez
Judith Martin	Meg Marvil	Kerri Van (Moderator)

Members-at-Large: Art Hughes, Susan Hughes, Carol Litner, Corey Lockridge, Carin Maki, Tammy Pilat, Judith Ouellette, Mary Lou Provost, Karen Seelbach, Doris Simon, Sandy Sourbeck, Linda Wulff

The Board of Deacons and the congregation would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to the retiring class of 2024. We are profoundly grateful for the unwavering dedication and invaluable service of our Deacons: Beverly Edwards, Norma Bentley, Deanna McDonnell, and Judith Martin. Their tireless efforts and committed ministry have left an indelible mark on our community. As they step down from their roles, we honor their contributions and celebrate their journey with us. Thank you for your service.

The Board of Deacons, in their role as caregivers, serve not only our congregation but also the wider community. They embody the love of Jesus Christ, reaching out through direct and indirect contact, phone calls, visits, cards, food, fellowship, and fostering a sense of belonging. They extend their care to those grieving, lonely, hungry, ill, or recovering and warmly invite others to join them in their ministries.

Acting with love, the Deacons shoulder the burdens of others, sharing their gifts of service across a spectrum of ministries. They are more than just the hands and heart of the church. They are its soul, breathing life and love into everything they touch. As Presbyterian Deacons, their mission is a testament to their faith and commitment to serving others.

Deacons Budget: \$2,000

Total expenses: \$1,912.36 - **Balance: \$87.64**

Designated Funds

Opening Balance January: \$6,230.96 -- Total Income: \$1,327.36 -- Total expenses: \$855.36 - **Designated Fund Balance: \$6,722.96**

2023 Highlights

Spiritual Activities

- Prepared the Lord's Supper on Communion Sundays, Christmas Eve, Maundy Thursday, and Easter.
- Attended a joint meeting of the Session and the Deacons on September 12.

Community Services

- Conducted American Red Cross Blood Drives on March 24 and September 8.
- Served 1050 lunches on twenty-one dates at the ChristNet Daytime Center since February 3.
- Provided 210 dinners for guests at an overnight ChristNet shelter March 19-25.
- Expanded the space of our food pantry and served more than six times the amount of food given in 2022.

Educational and Community Services

- Provided mentors at Arno Elementary School through the Kids Hope USA program.
- Provided bookmarks for the Allen Park Public Library.

Ministry Launches and Activities

- Launched the Worry Worm ministry.
- Our Sweets and Treats ministry provided sweets and treats to our police and fire departments throughout the year.
- Hosted a cookie reception for Rev. Bill Colwell's memorial service on June 3.
- Provided white and red roses with appropriate announcements for births and deaths during worship.
- Easter Lily and Poinsettia Dedication Booklets were prepared and distributed.
- New GriefShare videos were purchased for our online GriefShare workshops.

Special Events

- Hosted Muffins for Moms and Donuts for Dads after worship to celebrate Mother's Day and Father's Day holidays.
- Hosted Ice Cream Socials after worship on June 4 and July 16.
- Hosted a highly successful Trunk or Treat community event on October 27.
- Participated in the City of Allen Park Lighted Christmas Parade with our church bus and passed out free hot chocolate in front of the church.
- Hosted a Christmas Party for the students in Kids Hope USA at Arno Elementary.

Holiday Assistance

- Provided Christmas assistance to seventy-three local children and adults.

MINISTRIES OF THE DEACONS

Congregational Care

In the past year, our Congregational Care team has actively engaged in various ministries to support and care for our congregation and community. Here are some of the critical areas of our work:

Monthly Cards

We have consistently sent monthly cards to our congregation, ensuring our members feel connected and cared for.

Birthday Cards

Adult members of our congregation were remembered on their special day with a birthday card, adding an individualized touch to their celebrations.

Bereavement and Aftercare Grief Ministry

Our Bereavement and Aftercare Grief Ministry has been active, providing much-needed support to those dealing with loss through cards, phone calls, meals, visits, and GriefShare workshops.

Handmade Bereavement Layettes for Infants

We provided handmade outfits for babies who sadly passed away. Each outfit includes a blanket, hat, and gown, available in small, medium, and large sizes. These outfits are crafted with love and care, offering a small comfort in a time of profound loss.

Other Cards

We have also sent cards for initial bereavement, anniversaries, births, support, graduations, and special birthdays. These cards have helped us reach out to our members during their significant life events.

Direct Communications

Our team has made numerous calls, visits, meals, and other direct communications, ensuring our members feel heard and supported.

Memorial Prayer Stones

We have delivered Memorial Prayer Stones, including a Garden Stone, as tangible symbols of our prayers and thoughts after the loss of a loved one.

Prayer Squares

Prayer squares were handmade for various ministries of the Deacons, including ChristNet dinners and lunches.

Mitten and Hat Ministry

Hats and mittens were handmade with recycled sweaters and donated to ministries of the Deacons and other outreach programs.

Sunshine Bags

Our Sunshine Bags have brought joy and comfort to many. In addition, we have our Mini Sunshine Bags. These have been delivered quarterly to those living in assisted living or who are isolated. They bring a ray of sunshine into their lives.

Our mission remains steadfast: to provide care, comfort, and a sense of community to those in need. We look forward to continuing these essential ministries in the coming year.

Prayer Shawls and Lap Robes

Handmade prayer shawls and lap robes have served as a tangible symbol of our community's care and prayers. They have been gifted to those needing comfort and healing, serving as a warm embrace from our community and a reminder of our collective prayer and support.

Our prayer shawls have touched many lives in the past year, providing comfort during grief, illness, or stress. As we move forward, we remain committed to this beautiful ministry, knitting and crocheting shawls, lap robes, and bonds of love, faith, and community.

Fifth Sunday Missions

January 29, 2023: Metropolitan Detroit Diaper Bank - 60 packages of various products were collected, as well as \$190.

April 30, 2023: Heart of Gold Ministries: we collected over one hundred items for this nonprofit that serves at local assisted living facilities to be used for Bible Trivia prizes.

July 30, 2023: Conducted a cereal drive and collected 106 boxes of cereal for Blessed Hope Church in Lincoln Park.

December 30: Hats, mittens, and gloves for area nonprofits for after-Christmas giving.

Ongoing Past Fifth Sunday Missions: Metro Detroit Share -- providing support to Michigan families who experience the loss of a baby during pregnancy or infancy. During 2023, we contributed 82 handmade bereavement blankets, three hats, and three booties.

Animal Shelter Donations

Since April 2023, we have been collecting needed items for animal shelters. The donations are delivered to local shelters on a rotating basis.

MINISTRY REPORTS

Honeycomb Food Pantry

In 2023, we continued with a self-select model of shopping vs pre-packed boxes. In this manner, guests were able to select what they knew they would use for a week's worth of meals (3 meals per day), therefore eliminating waste. It also allowed us to know exactly what foods and hygiene products were appropriate to distribute, which led to our asking for very specific donations from our congregation each month. Guests made appointments to "shop," and we served as hosts to 389 different guests, some who came monthly, some less often.

In Spring 2023, we doubled our tiny space in the main building's former coat closet by removing a hat rack. The Memorial Committee graciously provided funding from undesignated funds to purchase shelving and curtains. The new space allowed us to stock more items and be able to move about with guests more easily.

The total number of goods distributed to our pantry guests was 22,822, which was SIX times more than given in 2022! In addition, 993 items from the Scout collection were distributed to Grace Church.

ACTUAL COST \$19,049.59 -- TOTAL VALUE \$29,516.59

Details below:

- The number of goods we had to purchase for pantry use was 12,263 at a cost of \$16,220.13.
- An additional 1,572 goods were purchased to kick-start the year 2023 in December 2022 at a cost of \$2,829.46.
- Monetary Donations received in 2023: \$10,277.04 direct deposit from APPC members/friends, including a Hill Family memorial.
- \$4,000 sponsorship from Blue Cross Complete
- \$1,283.63 in gift cards or loose change
- \$1,000 from Allen Park Kiwanis
- \$ 479 from Allen Park Culver's

We began the year with a \$1,429.68 carry-over balance from the year 2022.

The number of goods donated to our pantry in 2023 was 7,491; the estimated value of these items was \$10,467:

- APPC: 3,777
- Sarah Ramirez colleagues: 188

- Scouts: 1,547 (plus 1,728 from 2022)
- American Legion: 172
- Swift Trucking: 600
- Athletico Physical Therapy: 125
- Melvindale High School: 484
- New Wine Covenant Church: 114
- Southminster Presbyterian: 265
- Target: 28
- Zeal Credit Union: 191

Mobile Food Unit:

- Social workers from Melvindale-Northern Allen Park Schools contacted us when there was a family or individual student in need of food/toiletries. Items were packed and delivered. This is an extension of the Food Pantry, and totals are included in the above statistics.

MANY MANY THANKS to the Food Pantry team for their volunteer service this year: Barb Antioch, Amy Bowerman, Linda Clark, Art Hughes, Meg Marvil, Mary Lou Provost, Linda Wulff.

Duties included hosting, sorting through donations, shopping, lots of stocking, inventory, and delivery. Also, thank you to the front desk volunteers for answering calls and scheduling guests: Linda Clark, Linda Wulff, Andrea Carlson, Marie Herr, and Judy Martin. Special Thanks to Rita Javorski and Mark Dimitroff for their ongoing support!!

Respectfully submitted, Beverly Edwards, Volunteer Manager

GriefShare Workshops

In 2023, we conducted on Zoom:

- **Two 13-week GriefShare workshops**
- **Two one-night workshops** on “Surviving the Loss of a Spouse”
- **One one-night workshop** on “Surviving the Holidays”

These workshops provided support and guidance to those navigating the difficult grief journey.

Grief Aftercare Ministry

Our Aftercare Ministry continued its compassionate outreach to those mourning the loss of loved ones. In 2023, we sent cards to commemorate:

- The **first birthdays** of loved ones
- The **first Mother’s Day or Father’s Day**, when applicable
- The **first Christmas**
- The **anniversary of the death** of loved ones

Immediate sympathy cards were sent following the death of a loved one, offering comfort and support during a challenging time. Our mission remains steadfast: to provide care, comfort, and a sense of community to those in need. We look forward to continuing these essential ministries in the coming year.

Respectfully submitted, Norma Bentley, Grief Ministries Coordinator

ChristNet Services

ChristNet - Designated Funds: \$2,632.34

Undesignated: \$1,205.66 -- Lunches: \$1,285.83 -- Dinners: \$140.85

During the week of March 19-25, we provided 210 individual dinners for the guests at ChristNet who were sheltered at a local hotel. We also provided breakfast items for the Daytime Center.

- Seventy-four volunteers participated, not including nameless donors, using our Amazon Gift registry.
- Two businesses provided food and monetary donations: Secret Recipes and Gordon Food Service.
- Dorcas and Ruth Circle participated.
- Our Sunday School made 210 hand-colored placements and hospitality bags.
- Mary Lou Provost made forty prayer squares.

ChristNet Daytime Center

- We provided lunch for fifty people on 21 days in 2023 at the ChristNet Daytime Center for men, women, and three children and provided Worry Worms, Christmas gifts for three children, toiletries, and prayer squares.

Kerri Van began meeting with the staff of ChristNet Services in September in anticipation of returning to the rotating model of hosting ChristNet overnight at churches starting in January 2024. (Allen Park Presbyterian Church will host ChristNet from March 17 to 24, 2024).

Art Hughes and Kerri Van coordinated a large milk delivery from Grace Church to the ChristNet Daytime Center.

Respectfully submitted, Kerri Van, ChristNet Coordinator

Kids Hope USA Report

As we reflect on the past year and look forward to the 2024-2025 school year, we are filled with gratitude for the impact of the Kids Hope USA program and the dedicated mentors who make it possible.

This year, we faced the challenge of several mentors stepping back after over a decade of service. Their contributions have been invaluable, and we honor their commitment. As we bid them farewell, we actively seek to recruit new mentors for the upcoming school year.

The program continues under the leadership of director Amy Bowerman, who is now in her eighth year of service. Plans are also underway to bring on a co-director to strengthen our team further.

The commitment asked of our mentors is one hour per week during the school year. This time is spent sitting, talking, playing games, and assisting with schoolwork with an elementary school student. The impact of this one hour is profound, as evidenced by the appreciation expressed by the students we serve.

Efforts to raise awareness about the program have included a minute for mission, an interview on the Good News Live, and a presentation to Kiwanis in Allen Park. We are grateful for these opportunities to share about the work we do.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all who have supported this program. Your contributions make a difference in the lives of the students we serve. As we move forward, we invite those who can see themselves in this role to join us. Your involvement would be appreciated.

In conclusion, the Kids Hope USA program is a valuable part of our community, and the need for mentors is great. We look forward to the coming year with anticipation and hope, confident that with your support, there will be mentors for every child.

Respectfully submitted, Amy Bowerman, Kids Hope USA Director

Christmas Giving Tree Report

The Christmas Giving Tree initiative has been a resounding success, with numerous donations received and many individuals assisted. Here is a summary of the contributions and their impact:

Beneficiaries

- **Forty-five** individuals at Rogers School
- **Twenty-one** children with special needs at Trillium Academy
- **Three** children at ChristNet Daytime Center
- A single mom with a baby
- Two adult members

In total, we were able to help **seventy-three** people through this initiative.

Donations Received

We received a variety of items, including:

- **188** games
- **63** stuffed animals
- **360** coloring books
- **90** packs of crayons
- **25** bath bombs
- **45** scrunchies
- **60** craft kits
- **40** miscellaneous toys
- **68** candy canes
- Assorted hats, scarves, gloves, and socks
- **65** gift bags
- **75** gift cards, each worth \$25

Financials

The Deacons had allocated \$400 from their budget for the event, but no funds were used from the budget. In addition, two \$25 gift cards were utilized to purchase stuffed animals for the Giving Tree event next year. We would like to express our gratitude to Dabiero Charities for their generous financial donation.

This report highlights the generosity of our community and the significant impact of the Christmas Giving Tree initiative. We look forward to continuing this tradition in the coming years.

Fifth Sunday Mission Report: Hats and Gloves

The Fifth Sunday Mission held on December 30 was a resounding success, with numerous donations of hats, gloves, and other items. Here is a summary of the contributions and their destinations:

Donations Received

We received a variety of items, including:

- **40** scarves
- **118** pairs of kids' gloves
- **39** pairs of large gloves
- **230** pairs of socks

Distribution

The donations were distributed to several organizations and institutions:

- A box of hats and gloves for our food pantry
- Two boxes for ChristNet Warming Center
- Additional boxes for ChristNet overnight guests in March 2024
- A box for Grace Church
- Boxes for Arno, Lindeman, and Bennie Elementary Schools in Allen Park
- A box for a Toddler Daycare in Detroit

In addition, **twenty-four** lap robes were donated to Heart of Gold Ministries, and **230** pairs of socks were donated to the ChristNet Warming Center and our church's ChristNet initiative in March.

This report highlights the generosity of our community and the significant impact of the Fifth Sunday Mission. We look forward to continuing this tradition in the coming years.

Respectfully submitted, Nancy Atkinson, Christmas Ministries Coordinator

Community Event: Trunk or Treat - A Resounding Success

Following the conclusion of our Trunk or Treat event, we convened a project wrap-up discussion to assess its success. Here are the key takeaways:

- **Participation:** thirty-two trunk hosts, five hospitality volunteers, and our scouting troop.
- **Attendance:** The event was a hit, with over 1,000 enthusiastic trunk-or-treaters participating in the festivities.
- **Estimated Total Attendance:** The event drew an impressive crowd, with an estimated 3,000 to 4,000 people in attendance, making it a genuinely community-wide celebration.
- **Candy Donations:** Our community's generosity was on full display, with a staggering 24,000 pieces of candy donated for the event. This figure does not even include the additional contributions made by the trunk hosts!
- **Prizes Awarded to Trunk Hosts:** We awarded three prizes to the trunk hosts for the first time.
- **Local Business Participation and Donations:** Allen Park Police Department, Jim Beri, Allen Park Chamber of Commerce, Culver's of Allen Park, Benjamin Hughes, Allen Park Downtown Development Authority, E. Suzan Maxey, Graphic Artist, Gail McLeod, Mayor of Allen Park, Secret Recipes Family Dining, Throneburg Real Estate Team, and Zeal Credit Union.

We extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who played a part in making this event a resounding success. Your efforts resulted in a truly 'spooktacular' experience for all!

Respectfully submitted, Kathy Hollowell and Kerri Van

In conclusion, the Board of Deacons expresses its deep appreciation for the unwavering support from the congregation, the community, and Pastor Tim Marvil. We kindly request your continued prayers and support of our ministries.

Please do not hesitate to let us know how we can pray for you. Furthermore, we warmly welcome all interested in joining us in our ministry.

Respectfully submitted: Kerri Van, Moderator of the Board of Deacons

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