

These ministries effectively minister to physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of people in ways that we cannot by ourselves, both locally and through our international partners. Since the start of the *Free to Thrive* campaign in 2011, we have steadily increased our missions giving to \$76,000 per year, which is 8.6% of our budget. The elimination of our mortgage debt would easily free up the necessary \$13,000 per year for us to finally achieve that 10% goal.

Hopefully it is not hard to imagine us crossing that finish line of being *completely free to thrive*, especially with all we have accomplished so far. If we can eliminate that remaining \$316,000 over the next year through the generous, above-and-beyond giving of our GCC family, we will truly be *Completely Free to Thrive*. The projects and efforts envisioned here are only the “first fruits” of being completely free to thrive, the first examples of ways we will be more effective in leading people to the thriving life. When these initiatives are complete, there will still be an ongoing \$60,000 per year added to our financial resources available for productive ministry.

So, imagine a Gurnee Community Church that is completely free to thrive. Imagine a Church where we are planting the seed of faith with children and teens, and we are connecting with their entire families as a result. Imagine a church facility that is fertile soil for thriving ministry – a welcoming environment where people from the community feel welcome as they experience the risen Christ. Imagine a Church where we are debt-free and able to generously water with resources the ministry opportunities inside and outside of the church.

For the last 160 years, Gurnee Community Church has been called to serve this community. We are responsible to fulfill the mission of Christ in this community: To lead people into the life-giving and thriving existence we were all created for. By God’s grace, together we can do more than just imagine – we can bring this into reality.



**GURNEE COMMUNITY CHURCH**  
**160TH ANNIVERSARY EST. 1860**

## Our Mission

Jesus Himself said the reason He came into the world was to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10), to bring them not only forgiveness and eternal life (John 3:16), but a full and thriving life with Him right now (John 10:10). Shockingly, Jesus then turned that mission over to the Church, saying “as the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (John 20:21).

Imagine a church that takes that mission seriously. Imagine a church that after 160 years still has a clear understanding of God’s specific calling for them as they move into the future. Imagine a church with energetic and gifted volunteers, ministry leaders, and staff, all working together in pursuit of that clear calling. Imagine a church with a growing congregation of people who are passionate about their spiritual growth, eager to use their gifts in ministry, and whose hearts break for people who don’t know God. Imagine a church with a building in a prime location to fulfill the mission of Jesus in their community; a building with the space available for a variety of both ministry programs and community events. Imagine a church with a beautiful and dedicated worship space that is configured to meet the needs of both traditional and more contemporary styles of worship. Imagine a church that meets for vibrant worship, relevant teaching, and life-changing community. In other words, imagine a church where people are **thriving**.

It shouldn’t be hard to imagine a church like that. This is a picture of Gurnee Community Church today. GCC is a place of Christ-centered passionate spirituality where people are thriving and pursuing the mission of Jesus to lead others to that thriving life. GCC is a great place to hear about Christ, grow in relationship with Him, and serve Him all your days. But to be a complete description of GCC today, we have to add something to the picture: Imagine a church, with all these advantages, that is not able to maximize their potential to lead even more people to that thriving life because a significant portion of their shared financial resources must be used to service a mortgage debt.

Unfortunately, this is also a part of the picture of Gurnee Community Church today. Through the Spirit-led generosity of GCC, between

2011 and 2014, we reduced the amount of our mortgage debt by over 1 million dollars.

However, the remaining balance on the mortgage is currently \$350,000, and will still be \$316,000 one year from now. This translates to approximately \$51,000 per year in mortgage payments, and an additional \$9,000 in FEMA flood insurance payments that are required by our bank. This is \$5,000 per month that must come out of our operating budget, very little of which reduces the principal balance.

To be clear, your tithes and offerings at GCC are generous and consistent. We are able to operate the facility, fund ministries at an adequate level, and do great things for God. We are not in a financial crisis. We are *surviving*, and even thriving in many areas, but we are not **completely free to thrive** as a church because of this financial situation, which means we are not completely free to lead others to the thriving life to our God-given potential.

## Our Vision

Imagine what GCC would look like if we were **completely free to thrive** – if we were uninhibited financially in our ability to connect with the community and lead people to the thriving life in Jesus Christ. Imagine a church that is free to maximize our efforts to **plant seeds, create fertile soil, and water generously** so that individuals can thrive in Christ as God produces the increase. This was the vision of the “Free to Thrive” campaign that began in 2011, and much of that vision has been realized through your generosity.

### Plant Seeds

First, we imagined a church that is expanding their efforts to plant the seeds of the Word of God in the young people of our community by taking full advantage of our location next to the local middle school and high school through the development of an after-school outreach ministry utilizing a newly remodeled space within the building, as well and renew our emphasis on ministry to children through remodeled and dedicated space designed specifically to be engaging to children and appealing to parents. Much of this dream has become a reality.

The Venue after-school program has become a reality. We now have dedicated spaces where teenagers can meet, study, play games, and just “hang out” in a specifically Christian environment. Our children’s check-in area and gym has been decorated specifically for children’s ministry, and the addition of a climbing wall has been a valuable asset for both youth and children’s events. These changes have already increased the opportunities for children, teens, and their entire families to connect with the message of the Gospel and begin the thriving life. But there are still conflicts in events, and many situations where the available space is not ideal for the group size or activity. Eliminating the mortgage would free up the resources to build-out the unfinished “North Wing” into numerous multi-use spaces that dramatically enhance our ministry to children and youth, both within GCC and in the community. This increase in space would give us the opportunity to be “For Our Neighbors” by offering meeting and event space to ministry and community groups serving young and old alike.

### Create Fertile Soil

Second, we imagined a church that is expanding their efforts to create fertile soil for people to thrive by creating a more welcoming environment. This welcoming environment would maximize the impact on visitors by eliminating most of the typical issues that leave a poor first impression and prevent deeper levels of connection where thriving can begin. Again, much of this dream has become a reality. We resurfaced parking lot, we updated bathroom facilities, and we completely remodeled the Community Room and the Library. This more welcoming environment not only impacts new visitors but is also providing our existing congregation with comfortable spaces for Bible studies, small groups, and other ministries. But these efforts are not complete. The unfinished “North Wing” creates a poor first impression, and there are still many spaces in the older part of the building in desperate need of updating.

### Water Generously

Thirdly, we imagined a church that is expanding its efforts to water generously with resources the work that God is already doing in our community and around the world. This included the goal to increase our financial giving to ministries outside of our church to at least 10% of our operating budget, more than twice what it was at the start of the campaign.