

Messiah Church



2023 Annual Report

Annual Congregational Meeting: January 28, 2024

Our Mission:

Live in a way our neighbors will see, mercy and truth are met in Jesus.

MESSIAH CHURCH

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Location: Messiah Church Sanctuary

Date: Jan 28, 2024

Time: 12:30 Meeting (following Sunday Service)

MEETING AGENDA

- I. Call to Order by Council Chair- Steve Schow**
- II. Sing Opening Hymn**
- III. Scripture Reading-**
- IV. Opening Prayer**
- V. Church Ministry Reports**
 - Summaries
 - Questions and Answers
- VI. Other Messiah Ministries**
 - Summaries
 - Questions and Answers
- VII. Sponsored Ministries and Missions**
 - Summaries
 - Questions and Answers
- VIII. Proposed Budget for 2024- Al Hutchenreuther**
- IX. Vote on Proposed Budget** (if a quorum is present for vote per constitution)
- X. Vote on filling open Council seats.**
 - * Two Seats (three year terms)
 - * One alternate position
 - **** positions determined by vote rankings
- Candidates:** George Goines, Jackie Nash, Rosie Hudson, John Gibson
- XI. Closing Hymn / Song**
- XII. Adjournment**

Church Ministry

2023 PASTORAL REPORT-Jeff Hunt

Live in a way that our neighbors will see, mercy and truth are met in Jesus.

This is the tagline at the end of our church emails. This is the mission of our church. It says to me that any true expression of God's life lived in ours will be shown in ways that are merciful and gracious. We are told in our Bible that Jesus is the perfect expression of God the Father, that all the fullness of God lives in Jesus. We are told that God is Love, and that no one has ever shown divine Love more perfectly than when Jesus sacrificed his life for us, his friends. The meaning of human existence was transformed when Jesus received his life back again, walking out of his grave leaving Death lying devastated in its' tomb. In Jesus his followers live and move and realize our purpose for existing – to amplify with our words and actions the message that God is Love. So that is how I look at what our church is doing – with the questions, “Does this effort show who God is? Does this activity draw us along the road Jesus is walking through our neighborhood? Can his gracious words be heard in our own?”

Community Night was something that started with Pastor Ara. It was a night full of activities! We would start with a community meal together, then split into smaller groups. There was a group for Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS), a Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meeting, Kids Club for younger kids and Youth Group for teenagers, and a Bible Study for adults. When Covid hit, Community Night was one of the first casualties. Last April the Community Meal portion was resurrected (!) for a 7-week test run in conjunction with New City Kids. The kids and their families were invited to stay after on Thursdays for the meal, and over 90 people showed up! We took a break during the summer vacation and the meals recommenced in September, now on Wednesday nights. There is a dedicated group of volunteers who cook and serve each week. Gloria Kneller has been leading a time of singing and prayer in the sanctuary following the meal. I am encouraged to see new relationships developing between our church people and the NCK community. It is also a joy to see people enjoying serving together with love. My hope for this ministry is that we would continue to grow these God-honoring relationships with the NCK community, and that we could find a way to integrate the fellowship of the meal with the time of worship and prayer that follows.

The **Food Pantry** is a big blessing to the many families who pass through our building in the course of a week. Bill Zeigler works tirelessly to glean food resources from several food banks, assisted by Kim Jones. Messiah also supplements a small portion of what is offered.

Immerse Bible Study Groups have continued in person and via Zoom. We have finished “Chronicles” this year and are currently reading “Poetry.” As was stated in last year's report, each group has its own pace and style, but the common subject matter gives our congregation a shared vocabulary that is valuable as we study God's word together on Sunday mornings and throughout the week. The new Council will help determine what we read next.

Men's Breakfast and Book Study meets every second Saturday from 9:00-11:00 AM in the parsonage. This year we read “*The Prodigal Prophet*”, a study of the book of Jonah, by Tim Keller. It's a great book! It was challenging and encouraging. Since finishing Jonah, we've begun to read Christian Community Development legend, Robert Lupton's book, “*Theirs is the Kingdom*”. This has been a good time of fellowship and encouragement for the men of our church family. My hope for this ministry is that these relationships would continue to grow and that the Holy Spirit would kindle a unifying vision through these men.

The Messiah Street Team has been going strong for almost a year now. Each Tuesday we load into the White Bullet van with food, drink, socks, gloves and hand warmers to bless our neighbors who are suffering on the streets. We have been partnering with my old colleague, Stanley Stinson's organization, Outreach Teams. They provide medical care and we provide comfort and spiritual care. We invite folks to Community Night meals and some have taken us up on the offer. Rashid Shakhmayev, Rita Brogan and Steve Schow have

been consistent ministers in this effort. I hope that as we become a trusted presence on the street that our church will be known as a place where all are able to come and be received warmly. I would love to see more from the congregation ride along with us to see our neighborhood in a new way.

It was unbelievably sweet to see the continued efforts of Therese Ratcliffe with the youth at Christmas this year. The **Christmas program** she wrote and directed was thoughtful, and purposeful in the way it united the congregation and grew the children in their faith. Therese has been tireless in her work with our youth and would very much like help in this endeavor. She is currently seeking someone to take over her role as default director of children's ministry.

I am encouraged that we needed to organize a Sunday morning **Nursery** rotation to care for the little ones who are suddenly in our midst! Bonnie Schow has taken on this task. Praise God!

On **Good Friday** we hosted a **bilingual service** in partnership with First Latin American Baptist Church, Refuge Church, Santos Church, and First Spanish American Baptist Church. Seven pastors spoke on each of the seven last words of Jesus on the cross. Close to 200 people filled our sanctuary for this remembrance of Jesus death; and filled our Fellowship Hall afterwards. It was an encouraging, beautiful expression of the local body of Christ. I hope this service will be an annual event that enlarges our vision for the broad activity of the Holy Spirit in Southwest Detroit.

Messiah re-connected with the **Boxes of Love** Thanksgiving outreach through our partnership with Pastor Terry Robinson of Cru Inner City. George Goines, Paul Newman, Tino Barrera, Bill Kletke, Jasper and Bruce Hunt, and myself delivered the boxes to 16 different families. The families in need were identified from the New City Kids families. We had Jesus centered conversations with many of them, despite some language barriers. My hope is that this outreach will be another way that we are able to express God's love for our neighbors.

We resumed our Spring **Work Day** in May. Many hands made for light work as we cleaned and organized our building together. We look forward to another work day in a few months!

Bonnie and Steve Schow and others (notably, the late, great, Gerry Yates) continued to cultivate the flourishing **Messiah Peace Garden**. We look forward to the springtime as the Garden continues to grow in beauty!

The warehouse next to our parking lot on Vinewood was **demolished**! Pray the warehouse next to our building on W Grand Blvd comes down this year as well. Pray also that the lot on the northeast corner of Toledo/WGB is used for life-giving purposes, or at least remains free of trucking traffic.

I am so thankful for our ongoing partnership with **New City Kids**. The ministry they are doing with the young people in our neighborhood is inspiring. Five days a week they are in our building teaching kids music, geography, and math. Teenage staff members are learning how to teach the younger kids and being inspired to achieve great things. They are all learning about the joys of following Jesus. I look forward to what God has in store for them this year, and for new ways we can support their efforts. Alex Goldsmith is particularly encouraging to me personally. In a similar vein, ministering on the street with Rashid Shakhmayev has been a joy for me this year. Please pray for him and Erin as they continue to discern the shape of their ministry in the U.S.

May the Lord bless you and keep you, Messiah Church. May the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the LORD turn his face toward you and give you his peace. Amen.

Jeff Hunt

MESSIAH COUNCIL REPORT 2023

A year of being together again.

This has been a year of returning to meeting freely and more often with each other without great concerns of spreading serious sickness. It has been a true joy to fellowship again on Wednesday nights, eating together, talking together, worshipping together, and serving together. Also, the men have started meeting every other Saturday for breakfast, Bible study, and discussions. It has been a tremendous blessing! The women continue to meet every Sunday morning for discussions, prayer, music, and Bible study (led by Marilyn Humprey via zoom), which they have been faithfully doing since just after the pandemic started. There are still 5 Immerse Bible studies going on during the week.

This year has also been an amazing year of ongoing building projects led by Alan Hutchenreuther and Tino Barrera. They include gutter repair, restoring the large front doors and the door by the Pastor's office, improved lighting for the parking lot and courtyard, new doors to the fellowship hall and back door to the nursery, electrical work throughout the building, exterior painting, and many small projects. Praise God! Thanks, guys, for all your hard work.

Another blessing that came to us very unexpectedly was the tearing down of the crumbling warehouse/parking garage right next to our parking lot. It has made an amazing difference and is much safer for kids and everyone. Praise God! We will see what the Lord might do this this space.

Finally, we are increasing our outreach to the neighborhood & city through Boxes of Love for Thanksgiving and through the street ministry every Tuesday from 10am-230pm with Pastor Jeff. The Council continues to reach out with visits, calls, and cards to members who are sick or homebound. We pray that next year there would be continued revitalization of our love for each other and the neighborhood, and that our ministries would serve each other more and serve those who need to hear the Gospel of saving grace and see it lived out through us!

In the love and service of Jesus,

Your Messiah Church Council

CONGREGATIONAL BUSINESS AND FINANCES 2023

2023 was a year of getting things back to normal for Messiah Church with our new pastor completing his first year and ongoing church operations continuing to return to more normal levels post pandemic. Actual general fund receipts were \$186,000 for the year which was \$22,000 over our significantly reduced budgeted income of \$164,000.

While it is good that general fund income exceeded the budget, it is merely a return to income levels of previous years. Through cautious fiscal management and careful monitoring of general fund expenditures during 2023, we were able to live within our means.

Given a return to a normal level of church activities in 2024, on-going expenses will also increase. Our new source of monthly revenue from renting out the second floor of the Parsonage to New City Kids for their offices is now fully in place and is helping to supplement other declines in general fund receipts.

The general fund reserve needed to see us through uncertain times is roughly \$31,000 to \$47,000 (two to three months of expenses). In 2024, our general fund reserves will be adequate to meet this requirement, however, it will continue to be necessary to keep a close eye on our expenditures. Adjustments to expenses can be made throughout the year as our financial picture becomes more clear.

During 2023 we continued to be blessed with one-time gifts to our General, Designated and Benevolence funds. These gifts allowed us to continue to meet our commitments for church operations, missions and local relief efforts.

In 2023, due to budget limitations, we were unable to make a contribution to the Capital Projects fund. In spite of this, by utilizing previously accumulated reserves we were able to make progress on projects that were long overdue. We were also able to make progress with on-going needed building maintenance, repairs and improvements.

Messiah Church should be able to meet all its financial obligations in 2024, however, in the face of rising costs general fund receipts will continue to impose limitations on our expenditures. Be that as it may, we continue to be blessed and thank the Lord for providing the means needed to do his work.

The Finance Committee

(Alan Hutchenreuther, Tom All, Paul Newman, Dave Racklyeft and Bettie Wilkinson)

BUILDING COMMITTEE/TRUSTEE

Greetings Messiah family.

The year 2023 saw our Messiah congregation loosening up in many ways from the restrictions of COVID-19. That included many of the repair/maintenance issues that we faced. Though manpower has yet to increase in numbers this past year, many projects have been accomplished, started, or have been scheduled to begin.

The Oldham Grant had a "Use by" deadline and that was graciously extended. We have been more active in making sure these monies along with our Capital Projects funds, are put to good use for the care of our building.

Electrical work, including lighting, Fellowship Hall Ramp doors, back Nursery door replacements, and other infrastructure projects have seen a marked progress in the upkeep that most of us rarely consider when coming to a worship service. The heating system is old but sturdy and well-maintained (appreciated on a January day!).

A Detroit City Inspection provided a list of items to fix, replace, or otherwise improve. Things like stair safety, electrical cord placement, bathroom accessibility, all the way down to details like coat hooks, and exit signs.

The Trustee Board used to have many regulars who oversaw projects, supplied expertise and manpower, and kept work expenses within budgeted standards (most of the time). These days, projects are addressed by fewer contributors, necessitating the need to "farm out" some of the work. Some among us are on an on-call list, and as a volunteer group, we maintain trustee duties in a little more ad hoc fashion than is ideal.

Thanks to all who have contributed your time, resources, and other efforts to all things Trustee! Please consider coming under the yoke with those who could use this type of encouragement.

We "maintain" by God's good graces.

Sincerely,
Tino Barrera,
Council/Trustee liaison

2023 CHILDREN'S MINISTRY REPORT

***"The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:
for gaining wisdom and instruction;
for understanding words of insight;
for receiving instruction in prudent behavior,
doing what is right and just and fair;
for giving prudence to those who are simple,
knowledge and discretion to the young—
let the wise listen and add to their learning,
and let the discerning get guidance—
for understanding proverbs and parables,
the sayings and riddles of the wise.
The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge,
but fools despise wisdom and instruction."***

This past year, as we in the congregation studied the book of Proverbs, these words stood out.

As we teach the stories from God's word, or teach about the fruit of the Spirit, as Paul did, we seek to impart "knowledge and discretion to the young".

This year, we prepared our own hearts first, and let the Spirit teach us, before we presented to the children.

The work we do, and the way we live our lives before them, has a lifelong impact on these children.

We have had the benefit of the teaching experience of Linda Fairo, Sharon LeDuc, Claire Manders, Valerie Pettovello, Glenna Schleusner, Bonnie Schow, and Therese Racklyeft. Julie Adams, Janis Barnhart, and Trena Canales were regular helpers. Magnus Hunt was an excellent helper a few times.

We served anywhere from 2 children to 12 children, from ages 4 to 14, on any given Sunday.

Students were given opportunity to share prayer requests, learn Scripture verses, and tell back the Bible stories that they learned. There were also games and crafts. They had notebooks in which to draw or write during the first part of the service.

In the Spring and Summer, children enjoyed playing out of doors. In October, students began learning their parts for the Christmas program. It was an achievement as well as a joy for the children to participate in the program.

We look forward to a new year, when we may invest in some new teaching materials, go on outings, learn new songs, and serve the congregation in new ways.

Respectfully submitted,
Therese Racklyeft

WORSHIP REPORT 2023

*Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord;
let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.
Let us come before him with thanksgiving
and extol him with music and song.*

Psalms 95:1-2

It has been my pleasure and privilege to serve another year as Worship Director at Messiah Church. Music remains an integral part of how we worship together as a church. The word of God encourages us to sing praises to the Lord, and so our worship service begins and ends with music. Every week, the congregation sings four songs, selected from a variety of musical styles but all chosen with the purpose of drawing our hearts and minds closer to the Lord. The adult choir is an important part of the musical heritage at Messiah Church and helps to draw the congregation into deeper prayer through the presentation of two anthems per month. The choir rehearses at 9:40 every Sunday morning and extends an open invitation to anyone interested in joining. Previous musical/choral singing experience is not required. I would like to thank everyone whose time, dedication, and effort make worship possible every week, whether through planning, technical assistance, administrative tasks, and/or musical abilities, including: Joe Corso, Mark Domm, Mary Duran, Maria Guadiana, Jasper Hunt, Alan Hutchenreuther, Lenore Hutchenreuther, Gloria Kneller, Sharon LeDuc, Paul Neumann, Dave Racklyeft, Malik Roumayah, Glenna Schleusener, Salim Setork, Steve Schow, and Bettie Wilkinson.

Moving into 2024, it is my continued hope and prayer that music will remain an integral part of worship at Messiah; that the words of the songs we sing will help us to better know and understand the goodness and greatness of our God; and in doing so, love and serve Him better every day. I also pray and invite you to join me in prayer, that if the Lord has gifted anyone in the church with the call to serve His people through music, they will hear that call and follow it.

Juliegha Barsenas
Worship Director

OTHER MESSIAH MINISTRIES

COMMUNITY NIGHT MEALS

We began the 2023/24 New City Kids year wondering if we would be able to keep a weekly schedule of cooking for Community Night without burning out as was the case near the end of last school year. A small group has committed to taking the lead on dinners and the first half of the year has gone well though the workload is taxing. The entire group shows up to serve and clean up nearly every Wednesday even when they're not doing the main part of the cooking. Often they provide part of the menu to help the main cook. Occasionally, when needed, a New City Kids teen will help serve.

We all recognize the good work that God is doing through Community Night dinners and we all see the benefit of gathering to work and fellowship together and have received many appreciative comments from New City Kids parents, but we need help.

One particular area where additional help is needed is with clean up, resetting the chairs, and putting away the tables after the meal is over. We ask the congregation to prayerfully consider getting involved in helping with Community Night to support this good work.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne and Dan Rivard, Tino and Debby Barrera

OUTREACH & CARE

Currently Messiah does not have an official outreach and care team. But there are many among us who are reaching out by visiting, making calls, sending letters, giving a lending hand, lifting up many in prayer, and providing for needs in various ways.

We want to extend a special thank you to Gia Potoczny and Harold & Audrey Schell for their thoughtfulness and kindness in continuing to send out cards and notes to our congregants.

COMMON GROUNDS

We are thankful that snacks, coffee and other beverages are served following church services in the Fellowship Hall. Head over to the Fellowship Hall after service for something to eat or drink and to engage in friendly conversation and fellowship with brothers, sisters, and visitors.

We want to thank Jeanetta Harris Lamb for being the driving force behind making sure everything is set up and cleaned up. And additional thanks for Gracie Bentley for keeping the coffee brewing and Tish Braswell for graciously helping out as well.

FOOD PANTRY

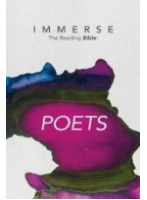
Bill Zeigler, Kim Jones, and Deborah Cavaness keep the food pantry well stocked at Messiah. This food includes canned goods, dry goods, fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy and meat. They also deliver food to people who are unable to make it to church. Jeanetta Harris Lamb works hard to keep it organized. This food is a blessing to those in need at our church and the New City Kids families.

COOKING COLLABORATIVE

For part of 2023, we gathered once a month to cook, share, and pray together in the parsonage. It was fun and meaningful. We were able to meet until the end of June. We had a summer picnic that ended up being our last gathering of 2023 due to personal issues and helping out with community night. If the Lord leads and time, energy, and transportation issues permit, we may restart sometime in 2024. Many of the participants need rides so any help with transportation would make moving forward possible.

IMMERSE BIBLE STUDIES

Beginning in 2020, Messiah set a goal of reading through the Bible together via the six books in the Immerse series. We are close to achieving that goal as the five different groups are wrapping up the 6th book, the Poets.



PEACE GARDEN

It was a great year for the Peace Garden. The plants are getting bigger and spreading. We were also able to add over 50 new species of plants! Bringing native plants to the neighborhood is important for keeping a good ecological balance. They attract native species of insects and animals that keep our little part of the world working as God first designed.

In June we had a Peace Garden tea party after church on a Sunday morning. It was a lovely event which included some cookies flavored with flower petals.

In August, the National Wildlife Federation and Detroit Audubon visited our garden on a Greenspace bus tour. The people on the tour loved the garden!

We continue to look for ways to use the garden to reach out to the community and welcome all interested people to join us as we spend time nurturing this beautiful space. It's a great way to de-stress and to connect with some of the beauty of God's creation.

Steve and Bonnie Schow

GIFTS FOR ALL GOD'S CHILDREN

Messiah has been sponsored by Gifts for All God's Children since 1987. GFAGC provides generous Christmas gifts to children in need who attend urban churches. GFAGC has helped us to serve and connect in deeper ways with the families in need in our congregation. We are thankful for that. GFAGC would like us to distribute the gifts in conjunction with a family Christmas party in the future. Looking for another person to attend training luncheons, manage wish lists, distribute gifts, and help implement a party.



MARANATHA MIRROR MESSAGES

Maranatha Mirror is a publication ministry. The ministry originated at Messiah Church as a means of outreach, inspiration, and discipleship. The messages were written by Richard Bieber, a former pastor at Messiah who was an anointed, gifted, and prolific writer. There are several thousand messages in the archives, more than half have never been published. Our goal is to continue publishing them across different formats and platforms and to maintain the archives as a means to inspire seekers and non-believers to find the Living Water they need in Jesus, and to disciple believers into living wholeheartedly for Jesus.

Formats:

Print: Maranatha Mirror prints messages in tract, pamphlet, and booklet formats.

Email Postings: E-mail posts are sent out twice a week. Subscribe at maranathamirror18@gmail.com

Website: (mmirror.net) The website posts and archives hundreds of messages, including audio messages.

Social Media: We have a small presence on Facebook and Instagram but seeking other platforms as well.

Pray For: Pray that the messages continue to inspire an awe of his holiness leading many to go forth seeking and living the Kingdom of Heaven. Pray for inspiration. Pray that we continue to be led and guided by God.

We thank Messiah Church for including us in their prayers and providing space for the print publications to be displayed and distributed. We thank the church members who faithfully read, distribute and/or share the messages and for those who have financially supported the costs of printing and posting the messages.

Eddie and Valerie Pettovello

Sponsored Ministries and Missions

Some missionary reports have been combined and/or condensed for this report.



New City Kids Ministry Update - January 2024

Dear Messiah Church Family,

It has been an incredible year at New City Kids: Detroit! We are overjoyed to celebrate with you all of the amazing things that God is doing in and through our partnership with Messiah Church. We are pleased to take a moment here to reflect on God's goodness and all that he has provided over this past year.

In 2023 we have seen tremendous growth in our summer camp, after school center and teen internship programs. We are now serving 60 elementary and middle school students and we have 27 teenagers employed in the Teen Life Internship Program.

We saw our 2023 class of seniors graduate with 100% of them heading off to college and we now have our largest class to date in Detroit with 7 high school seniors.

Over this past year we launched a capital campaign which allowed us to make some great improvements to our shared space like adding a stage for community time, moving our office space into the parsonage, and refinishing the gym floor.

Our staff team has grown and flourished this year! I (Alex) was able to take a summer sabbatical as I celebrated nine years on staff with New City Kids. Additionally we welcomed Grace Cruz as our Teen Program Director and Becca Leiva as our After School Center Assistant. This year has also been full of big and great news for our team with two babies and two weddings taking place over the past three months.

We hosted several amazing events including a high school worship retreat, our first ever middle school retreat, countless field trips, a teacher appreciation breakfast, several volunteer workdays, an incredible college tour to Chicago and our most recent Defined Show Benefit Concert!

One highlight of the year was the beginning of our partnering with Messiah Church for the Wednesday night community meal every week. This has been a tremendous blessing to the community, our kids, and their families. Every Wednesday when our staff team picks up students from the local schools, the students are quick to remind us with great excitement that it is community meal night.

We have had countless meaningful interactions with our young people including 83 mentorship meetings that occurred this year.

We are so grateful for the incredible partnership that we have in serving Jesus and our community with Messiah Church and we are looking forward to the year ahead together!

Many thanks,

Alex Goldsmith



MISSIONARY UPDATES

Team Expansion (Larry and Mary Francis)

Team Expansion Dearborn grew by one team member this year. We now have five team members. In the fall we also hosted an intern and will be hosting another intern in summer 2024. Team Expansion interns typically go on to eventually become full-time missionaries.

As team leader, I (Larry) trained both our new team member and our intern in the tools and strategies we apply as catalysts for Disciple-Making Movements, which are movements of rapidly reproducing disciples and simple/home churches.

Larry and Mary Francis
Making Disciples in Dearborn, Michigan



2023 was a great year for answered prayer. The COVID pandemic forced us to reboot, strategize, and pray fervently for God's guidance in next steps, and God has been faithful. He connected me with an Iraqi believer of eight years who had never been discipled but is now extremely zealous about being trained to make disciples among Dearborn's large Arab Muslim population. He also connected me with an Indian man in our large apartment community who is as excited as I am about growing a relationship, which I am praying will evolve into a Kingdom relationship. He gave me ESL (English as a Second Language) students with whom I have developed a strong relationship and had opportunities to share Christ. He gave Mary several believing women to mentor and multiple opportunities to share with her ESL class.

Mary also accepted an invitation to join the Board of Directors at Arab American Friendship Center, where we and two of our ministry teammates teach ESL. The school transitioned to new leadership this year and almost overnight has been transformed into a vibrant platform for sharing Christ in the context of teaching English to immigrants and refugees, with 140 students in the 2023 fall semester.

ESL classes are, and always have been during our nine years in Dearborn, a prime vehicle for establishing ongoing relationships with Arab Muslim men and women.

In our ministry plan for 2023 we indicated that we felt very strongly that God was leading us to start a home church for the purpose of offering community for new Arab believers and others who may need but do not have that sort of community. Our goal was to begin meeting in December, but circumstances have forced us to push the date back to January or February 2024.

Otherwise we continue doing what we do – evangelizing in the city's many neighborhoods and Arab commercial districts, serving the community in any way we can, training others to make disciples, mentoring other believers, and seeking and growing relationships with the hope of making disciples who make disciples.



Erin and Rashid Shakhmayev

Hello friends,

It's been almost **a year** since we left Russia. It is bittersweet for our family, as we miss our home, friends, and missions work in Russia, but are happy and grateful to be in the US. The last year has been one of constant transition as we moved three times and tried to find our footing in a different country. God is so good and has been with us every step of the way, but like with most changes, there have been many painful moments.

After we moved to the US, it became clear that our support that was enough in Russia would not be enough for us to live on in the States. So Rashid opened a handyman business and has had many projects to keep him busy. Rashid continues to work locally as a **handyman**. If you're in southeast Michigan and have any building or repair needs, please let us know! But as much as he enjoys working with his hands, our main desire is to serve the Lord, no matter where we might be.

It's been an honor for Rashid to travel weekly to downtown Detroit and work with a local pastor there in **homeless ministry**. He is very grateful for the opportunity to serve these precious people by praying for them and offering practical help such as food and clothing. The team he ministers with also provides medical help and first aid. **The best news is that a few of the people they've been feeding and helping have begun visiting church on Sundays!**



God has also put **immigrants and refugees** on our heart, and opened the door to work with an organization in metro Detroit that reaches out to foreigners. Rashid makes weekly visits to refugees from countries like Afghanistan and Syria, helping them to acclimate to life in the US, by showing them where to buy groceries, enroll their kids in schools, find jobs, etc. This ministry is the perfect fit for Rashid, who has lived in many different cultures. He grew up in Central Asia, then lived in Ukraine as a teen, then moved to Russia as a young adult. He has enjoyed reaching out to these precious people by helping them with practical matters and showing them the love of Christ. We have also built a relationship with a Russian/Ukrainian church in Warren, and Erin teaches English to Ukrainian immigrants there each Saturday.

In September we organized a **job seminar for immigrants**, to help them learn how to find and keep work in this country. A church in downtown Detroit graciously allowed us to host the seminar there. This was our first time organizing such an event, and we hope to be able to do more in the future.

In December our family participated in a **Christmas party for refugees**. Rashid had the very important role of **presenting a live nativity scene**. He shared the Christmas story with the families who attended, and a local pastor translated into Arabic.

Erin and our daughter Elaina ran a craft table where they told the refugee children the Christmas story with stickers. Erin and Elaina were amazed that this was the **first time most of the children had ever heard the story of Jesus' birth.**

In other family news, We're hoping that Rashid will receive his **Green Card in January. Please pray with us that he receives it with no problems soon!**

Our oldest son, **Emmanuel, is joining the National Guard** and leaves for training in January. Please pray for him! Our children Sam, Nate, and Elaina are doing well in school, and Elora continues to grow more active and keep us on our toes every day.

Erin has been having problems with her **gallbladder** and experiencing quite a bit of pain. The doctors say she may need surgery. **Please pray that her gallbladder would be healed and she would have no more pain.**

We are very grateful for this last year we've had in the US, and how God has been helping us to adjust to life here, step by step. We very much believe **we are still in a transitioning phase, and continue to seek Him for our future plans.** In the meantime, we are still accepting support through Mission Eurasia in order for Rashid to continue serving the homeless and refugees. Rashid's handyman business ensures that we have enough funds for our family's living expenses.

In order for us to keep serving the homeless and refugees and immigrants three days a week, we need you. **If you'll support us with your finances and prayer, we'll be able to continue driving to these ministry locations, buying food for the homeless, and reaching out to refugees and immigrants with home visits, seminars, and practical help.** Mission Eurasia has kindly agreed to keep processing our financial support for the time being. We are now talking with an organization that works here in the States in these areas. As soon as we have any updates to share, we'll let you know!

Thank you so much for your prayers and support for our family. Please continue to pray for us as we transition to life and ministry in the US. Please also consider supporting our work with the homeless and immigrants.

With love in Christ,

Erin, Rashid, Emmanuel, Sam, Nate, Elaina, and Elora Shakhmayev



Please continue to support us as we transition to life in the US. If you would like to donate, make your check out to "Mission Eurasia," indicating "Erin and Rashid Shakhmayev" on the memo line, and mail to: Mission Eurasia P.O. Box 496 Wheaton, IL 60187

Donations are tax-deductible. If you don't need a tax receipt, please donate through paypal (send to erinrashid@yahoo.com)

You can also give online through the Mission Eurasia website (<http://missioneurasia.org/>) by selecting "other designation" and typing in Erin & Rashid Shakhmayev.

Carol “Meryem” Schenk

Fall of 2023 marked the 20th anniversary of Carol Schenk’s fulltime ministry in Turkey. After intensive language study she established herself in Istanbul and began her signature lifestyle of walking evangelism as she frequented neighborhood businesses and tea shops.

She attended and supported various established Christian congregations.

A few years ago, she moved to a smaller city, Tekirdag, about an hour’s commute from Istanbul. Here she continued her neighborhood walking and actively integrated into a very small Christian congregation affiliated with her Istanbul church family.

Since May of last year (2023) Carol has been recovering and rehabbing from a severe leg infection in an extended care facility about an hour outside of Tekirdag. Most recently she undergoes PT and is slowly getting back on her feet.

In this facility she entertains inquiries about her Turkish Bible that is always visible on her bedside stand. She continues to share the Gospel, finds great satisfaction in extended prayer, and rejoices in significant weight loss over this time.

Her most earnest prayer is that she will regain strength and mobility that will allow her to return to her Tekirdag apartment and resume her evangelism and support of the local church.

Submitted by Marilyn Humphrey



Janice and Terry Robinson Campus Crusade for Christ (CRU)



"For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6 NASB

Greetings from Detroit! Christmas is two days away! Our prayer is that you will have a blessed time celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Thank you for praying for a good report from Terry's oncologist at MD Anderson. Before his appointment, he had bloodwork done. At the appointment, she shared with us that there was a small increase in the markers that are used to monitor the Multiple Myeloma. As a result, she thinks it might be time for Terry to begin maintenance treatment. Before a final decision is made, Terry will get a full-body PET Scan. Then she and Terry's oncologist here in Detroit will collaborate. The PET Scan has not been ordered yet. However, he has an appointment with his oncologist here on January 4th and it will probably be ordered then. Please continue to pray for a good report.

Also, thank you for praying for the \$1,000 in new monthly support that we needed for the matching funds! The Lord supplied that need! Join us in thanking God for His provision!

We have attached The Robinson Report for November 2023. The focus is on Boxes of Love® 2023.

With Love, Terry and Janice

Terry and Janice Robinson; 14221 Artesian St.; Detroit, MI 48223; Telephone: 313-689-1522 or 313-613-1158

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www.cru.org/innercity



Boxes of Love ® 2023

This year, our Boxes of Love Packing Parties were on Friday, November 17th and Saturday 18th with the distribution of the boxes being on Saturday the 18th.

We are very thankful for the many volunteers who helped us pack **1415 boxes which were added to the 162 boxes that were donated!** These **1577 were given to 56** of our church and ministry partners. We thank God for the boxes that were donated! So far from the stories and reports that we have received, **248 people received Christ and 18 rededicated their lives to Him!! And many of our church and ministry partners are continuing to connect with the families who received a Box of Love!** This has been very encouraging to our team!

We would like to share two stories from Acts of Faith and Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church respectively:

"We delivered a turkey to a widow who needed the box. She really wanted to have dinner with her family but could not afford to do so due to the RISING cost of food that did not meet her budget. So, this was a LIFELINE for her and not just her, but for 3 generations of her family would be sitting around the table enjoying the blessings from the basket.

However, after prayer I decided to help her unpack the contents of the box to help her get organized. When she opened the box, she started sighing and crying. I turned to ask her what was wrong, and she told me that she had NEVER owned her own Bible. She had read them and borrowed them but never had her own. She is 61 years old and renewed her relationship with Jesus. The Bible was more EXCITING to her than the turkey. When I

called her a couple of days later, she was reading out of her Bible. It is NEVER TOO LATE for someone to accept Jesus."

"During our conversion I asked all the questions on the Community Needs Questionnaire. Then I posed the question 'if you were to die today, are you sure you go to heaven?' She paused and said she wanted to go to heaven and her husband had been talking to her about God. I also asked her 'if she was standing before God today and He asked her, 'Why should I let you into My heaven what would you say?' She paused and said she didn't know. I asked her if she wanted to be sure right now? She said yes. I gave her the plan of salvation and her need for God. I prayed with her repeating after me, and for her assurance. She accepted Christ as her personal Lord and Savior, and I rejoiced with her and asked her if she had a Bible and told her to make sure to read it every day starting with the book of John and the Psalms and encouraged her to pray every day. I let her know she was saved, and all her sins had been forgiven. I let her know how important it was to have a church home. She said they were looking. I encouraged her to try Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church, and see how the Lord would lead her in being a member along with her family."



Volunteers packing the boxes

Please join us in prayer! Prayer Requests

1. Please pray that that our church and ministry partners will continue to connect with the families who received Boxes of Love, watering the seeds that were planted!
2. We are in the beginning stages of planning for our Homeless Care Kits Outreach in January and our second Disciple Training Course starting in April! Please pray that God will direct our steps as we plan.
3. We still have not found a location for our Cru Inner City Detroit office! We are praying for a location that will have the space for us to have the various trainings we do.

Thank you for your faithful financial gifts and prayers which make our ministry possible!

ABOUT DETROIT CRU

Cru is an international ministry committed to winning, building and sending Christ-centered multiplying disciples into the world. Founded in 1951 as Campus Crusade for Christ, we help people all over the world on high school and college campuses to connect with a mentor, discover their purpose and live that out in community. Our movement in Detroit achieves these goals through small group bible studies on campuses, large group meetings, and personal mentorship.

Voland family in Germany



Zeal for Kiel
January 2024
Ministry News

Two Americans
serving God's people
together with you in
Germany

We'd like to take this opportunity at the beginning of another year to thank you for your irreplaceable role in our lives. Because of your faithful partnership, we are serving God's beloved church in Kiel! Together with you, we're encouraging believers in their faith and sharing the love of Christ with those who need a message of hope.

We have the privilege of shepherding, equipping and encouraging not one but TWO churches in Kiel! The last few years have been rough on every church and pastor, to say the least, and both of our churches in Kiel have certainly experienced loss. We've lost members, and at times, our churches have lost motivation and focus in the midst of pandemic and war disillusionment. Because of your partnership, we've been able to speak prophetic words of hope from the pulpit, and words of healing across a cup of coffee, speaking God's word of truth over the chaos and division in our world. Thank you for supporting God's work in the local church in Kiel.

Germany continues to struggle with a refugee crisis, with political leaders divided on how to support and handle the situation long-term. We've seen friends deported, and others hanging on by a prayer, hoping their lucky day will come. Because of your partnership, we've been able to walk alongside our middle eastern and African friends, bear witness to their grief and joy and share a warm embrace with those who need to be reminded they are seen and precious to God. Thank you for supporting God's ministry to refugees and asylum seekers in Kiel.

And while we're engaged in ministry, we also have the privilege of raising 3 amazing daughters. It is a delight to see each of them grow to their full potential, discover their passions and personalities, and watch them grow in faith. Gabby, now in 9th grade, has blossomed into a wise, mature and confident young woman. She works hard in school and we see her improving as a student every year. Charlotte, now in 5th grade, finds the new challenges of middle school invigorating and has developed a diverse social circle. She is immensely creative and a natural and curious learner. Maddy, now in 2nd grade, has taken off in her reading and writing skills. She's reading short chapter books and loves to tell us all about the plot when she's done. She's not afraid to ask questions and is always on the lookout for kids at school who need a friend. Thank you for praying for our kids as we raise them on the mission field with all of the unique joys and challenges this entails.

When we think about all the places in the world we could be, we realize there is truly no other place we'd rather be than Kiel, Germany. God has called, equipped and prepared us to serve in this place, at this time, with these people. Even in difficult circumstances, we have much to be thankful for. Not the least of which is YOU, our faithful family, friends and ministry partners in the U.S. and Germany. Because you have chosen to answer God's call to send, partner and pray, we can answer God's call to share the love of Christ in Kiel. We could not do this in our own strength, and we would not want to try.

Thank you for being our faithful partners in ministry and walking this journey with us in faith. Your generosity is exemplary; your love for God and his church, extraordinary.

Wishing you God's rich blessings and abundant joy in 2024.

With love, from Kiel.... Phillip, Stephanie, Gabby, Charlotte and Maddy Voland

To partner with our family in Germany, please click [here](#) to make a secure gift online. Or mail a check to: Evangelical Covenant Church, P.O. Box 773420, Chicago, IL 60677.

Please indicate "Voland mission" on your check or online gift. Thank you for your faithful partnership!

Our mailing address is: Wehdenweg 32a 24148 Kiel, German



Christy Patterson-Hamilton InterVarsity

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Dear Messiah Church,

Thank you for the ongoing support for the work of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship at the University of Michigan– Dearborn (UMD), Henry Ford College, and the greater Metro Detroit-Flint InterVarsity ministry!

I have been on staff with InterVarsity for sixteen years and was the campus staff for over 13 years at the University of Michigan– Dearborn and helped plant the ministry at Henry Ford College eleven years ago. In March 2020, I was promoted to Associate Area Director for Metro Detroit-Flint, helping lead a staff team of seven staff and two volunteers while still overseeing the work at UMD.

In October 2022, I accepted a promotion to be the new Assistant Regional Director of Training & Development for the Michigan Lower Peninsula Region. In this role, I oversee the onboarding and training of all new staff across Michigan. I direct our spring and fall student conferencing for the Michigan Lower Peninsula region. I also work with our regional student interns and provide monthly training and spiritual formation for them throughout the year on a regional level. I am so grateful for the opportunity to influence campus ministry not just in Southeast Michigan, but across the whole of the Lower Peninsula as well.

I would love to invite you to consider increasing your support for my ministry in this next season. In the following page, I will outline my new responsibilities and detail the financial challenges that I am facing. Thank you for your willingness to pray about this request.

I will continue to send regular email updates on the work as well as hard copy updates, as I did this past year.

With appreciation,
Christy Patterson-Hamilton
Assistant Regional Director for Training & Development, Michigan Lower Peninsula Region, InterVarsity USA

Enclosures



INTERVARSITY'S MINISTRY IN MICHIGAN LOWER PENINSULA (MLP) *Includes Southeast Michigan, West Michigan, Mid-Michigan*

My New Role

My Assistant Regional Director of Training & Development role has widened my scope significantly; I am serving staff and students all across the Michigan Lower Peninsula Region. My specific responsibilities and goals include:

- Creating a standardized onboarding process for new staff.
- Overseeing and directing the training of first-year staff using a premier new staff training program – the Ministry Residency Program – and providing support and coaching touchpoints for these new staff.
- Increasing staff retention and competency in their ministry
- Overseeing and developing the regional training & development program for second and third year staff, called Foundations of Campus Ministry.
- Overseeing and directing our regional fall and spring student conferences that serve 250+ students across Michigan.
- Providing on-the-ground support and training to the Metro Detroit Flint area staff team.

Budget Overview and Request

As the scope of my ministry increases, so too my budget. The one-year ministry budget (202324) is projected to be \$90,441. This ministry budget funds both me and my administrative assistant and allows me to carry out the Plan outlined above, both in new staff training/onboarding and in developing our student conferencing program.

I have been so deeply grateful for the years of financial partnership and support Messiah has invested in the lives of students through the work of InterVarsity. I am currently raising the rest of this year's budget \$12,464 (\$1038/monthly) in new or increased partnerships. Would you consider increasing your partnership?

Thank you for the ways you've been part of seeing students transformed, campuses renewed and world-changers developed over the last 14 years. Thank you for considering this opportunity to increase your partnership with me and InterVarsity's ministry in the Michigan Lower Peninsula Region - I am so deeply grateful for your partnership!

[Link to 2023 Ministry Updates](#)

[Link to Celebrating 16 Years of Chrissy's ministry](#)

**Budget
Summaries
2023
&
Proposed
Budget
2024**

			2023 Budget	2023 Actual	2024 Budget	
2	GENERAL FUND BUDGET SUMMARY					
3		General Fund Beginning Balance	\$ 96,291	\$ 101,355	\$ 95,956	
4		+Receipts to General Fund (Tithes & Offerings)	\$ 164,051	\$ 185,943	\$ 180,000	
5		+ Bank Interest	\$ 528	\$ 566	\$ 550	
6		+ Building Use Reimbursement	\$ 14,400	\$ 14,550	\$ 16,800	
7		+ Memorials	\$ -	\$ 1,109		
8		+ Support by DG-Special Projects	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
9		- Disbursements	\$ 186,075	\$ 184,666	\$ 188,488	
10		- Transfers (Cap. Project. + Benevolence)	\$ 17,300	\$ 22,902	\$ 17,300	
11		Sum of income - expense for the year.	\$ (27,600)	\$ (5,399)	\$ (8,438)	2 month reserve
12	General Fund Final Balance		\$ 97,828	\$ 95,956	\$ 87,517	\$ 31,414.72
14	General Fund Detail					
15		Pastoral Compensation				
23		Total Pastor Salaries & Benefits	70,460	68,105	72,071	
24		Staff				3%
32		Total Staff Wages	35,846	34,185	35,211	
33		Total Salaries & Benefits	106,306	102,290	107,282	
34		Insurance & Fees				
38		Total Insurance & Fees	23,793	22,784.10	24,608	
39		Assistants				
43		Total Assistants	3,600	4,525	6,800	
44		Utilities				
50		Total Parsonage	3,048	2,627	2,800	
56		Total Church	24,969	20,023	20,706	
57		Total Utilities	28,017	22,650	23,506	
58		Office Supplies & Postage				
66		Total Office Supplies & Postage	4,950	5,194	5,205	
67		Sanctuary Supplies & Music				
72		Total Sanctuary Supplies & Music	3,151	2,129	1,534	
73		Christian Education				
79		Total Christian Education	0	107	1,000	
80		Breakfasts, Dinners, etc.				
84		Total Breakfasts, Dinners, etc.	1,700	2,458	2,900	
85		Building & Maintenance				
97		Total Building & Maintenance	14,153	22,529	15,653	
98						
99	Total General Fund Disbursements		185,670	184,666	188,488	
100		Transfer to Capital Projects	0	0	0	
101		Transfer to Benevolence	17,300	22,902	17,300	
102	Total General Fund Expense		202,970	207,568	205,788	

				2023 Budget	2023 Actual	2024 Budget	
103							
104			CAPITAL PROJECTS SUMMARY				
105			Initial Balance	\$ 36,448.72	\$ 36,449	\$ 23,246	
106			+ Transfer from General Fund	\$ -	\$ -		
107			+ Transfer from Designated Gifts	\$ -	\$ 490	\$ 12,000	DG-Special Projects + Oldham Grant
108			- Disbursements	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 13,693	\$ 25,000	
109			<i>Sum of income - expense for the year.</i>	\$ (15,000.00)	\$ (13,203)	\$ (13,000)	
110			Ending Balance	\$ 21,448.72	\$ 23,246	\$ 10,246	
111			Capital Projects.				
119			Total Capital Projects	15,000	13,693	25,000	
120			BENEVOLENCE SUMMARY				
121			Benevolence Beginning Balance	\$ 1,628	\$ 1,628	\$ 5,405	
122			+ Transfer from General Fund	\$ 17,300	\$ 22,902	\$ 17,300	
123			+ Transfer from Designated Gifts	\$ 4,000	\$ -	\$ 4,000	
124			- Benevolence Disbursements	\$ 22,902	\$ 19,125	\$ 22,902	
125			<i>Sum of income & expense for the year.</i>	\$ 26	\$ 5,405	\$ (1,602)	
126			Benevolence Ending Balance	\$ 26	\$ 5,405	\$ 3,803	
127			Benevolence Disbursements				
128			Worldwide				
129			ECC-Central Organization	3,700	3,702	3,700	
130			Carol Schenk - Turkey	3,000	3,000	3,000	
131			Mission Eurasia (Shakhmayevs)	1,602	1,602	1,602	
132			Total Worldwide	8,302	8,304	8,302	
133			Local Ministries				
134			ECC-Great Lakes Conference	3,000	3,000	3,000	
135			Cru (Robinson)	900	900	900	
136			Intervarsity (Christy Hamilton)	600	600	600	
137			Team Expansion	2,400	2,400	2,400	
138			Community Night Meals	1,200		1,200	
140			Total Local Ministries	8,100	6,900	8,100	
141			Uncommitted Benevolence	500	0	500	
142			Local Relief				
148			Total Local Relief	6,000	3,921	6,000	
149			Total Benevolence	22,902	19,125	22,902	

						2023 Budget	2023 Actual	2024 Budget	
150									
151					DESIGNATED GIFTS SUMMARY (These unbudgeted items are reported for information purposes only.)				
152					Note: Gifts that are <i>recommended</i> for specific ministries are forwarded subject to Council approval.				
153					On occasion, Council may redirect designated gifts to another area of need.				
154									
155						Initial Balance	Receipts	Transferred or Disbursed	Balance
156					Capital Projects	\$ -	\$ 490	\$ 490	\$ -
157					Carol Schenk, Turkey	\$ -	\$ 4,100	\$ 4,100	\$ -
158					Charlotte Mason Community School	\$ -	\$ 300	\$ 300	\$ -
159					Street Team	\$ 3,755.91	\$ 3,520	\$ 5,706	\$ 1,569.54
160					Gifts For Local Relief	\$ 4,115.65	\$ 848	\$ 350	\$ 4,613.65
161					Gifts For Special Projects	\$ 40,737.24	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 40,737.24
162					Total	\$ 48,608.80	\$ 9,258	\$ 10,946	\$ 46,920.43
163								\$ 10,456.37	\$ 46,920.43
164					2023 SUMMARY		Balance		
165					Fund Balances				
166					General Fund		\$ 95,955.69		
167					Benevolence		\$ 5,404.75		
168					Capital Projects		\$ 23,245.80		
169					Designated Gifts		\$ 46,920.43		
170					Suspense		\$ -		
171					Total		\$ 171,526.67		
172					Bank Balances				
173					Savings		\$ 113,570.27		
174					Checking		\$ 57,956.00		
175					Total		\$ 171,526.27		