

Congregational Meeting – November 10, 2204
Gloria Dei Church Programs, Teams, Ministries, & Missions

Building Use

Jennifer Suit – Office Manager

Church groups/activities that are meet/take place here on a regular basis: Caring for Friends (monthly), Growth Opportunity Center (daily), the Labyrinth (monthly January through March; May; September through December); Lunch & Learn (monthly March, April, May, November, & December), Matinees & Munchies (monthly January, March through May), Men’s Ministry (twice monthly), after church fellowship in Sacred Grounds (weekly January through June & September through December), Small Groups (weekly September through November), Yoga (weekly), plus meetings for Staff (twice monthly), Church Council (monthly), Finance (monthly), Property, and the Preschool Board. The Endowment Board meets virtually (quarterly).

Special church events that have taken place this year: Family Paint Night (February), Meet the Artist (March), Palm Sunday Community Brunch & Easter Egg Hunt (March), Maundy Thursday Dinner Church (March), Celebration of Ministry Service and Community Dinner (April), Church Council Retreat (April), Flea Market (June), Congregational Meetings (June & November), Greeter and Hospitality Volunteer Orientation (June), Tweens and Youth BBQ (July), Vacation Bible School (week-long in August), Small Group Leaders Orientation and Training (August), Youth Ministry Volunteer Orientation (August), a wedding (September), Fall Kickoff (September), Volunteer Meal Packing Event with Rise Against Hunger & Thrivent (October), Trunk-or-Treat (October), Celebration Sunday (October), Tweens and Youth Friendsgiving (November), Preschool Scholastic Book Fair (week-long in December), along with several funerals throughout the year in the Sanctuary, Chapel, and Garden of Hope.

Outside groups that meet here at the church on a regular basis: Adult Children of Alcoholics (weekly), Al Anon (weekly), BSA Troop 208 (weekly), City Church of Philadelphia (bi-weekly), Dance Dynamics (daily), Debtors Anonymous (weekly), Grief Support Group (monthly), Growth Opportunity Center (daily), New You (weekly), Nicole’s Place (daily), Overeaters Anonymous (weekly), Social Skills classes (weekly), Stage Company (weekly February through April, September & October, and week-long camp in June), and Women’s Club of HV (twice monthly January through May, and September through December).

Outside groups that occasionally use space: American Red Cross Blood Drive (June), Life Line Screening (March, July, & December, the elections (April & November), and many private events (i.e., baby shower, birthday party, family reunion). The number of private events increased in 2024.

Off campus activities and volunteer events: Holiday Party for the GDC Staff and Council (January), OHAAT Volunteer days (January, April, July, & October), Caring for Friends (January through April), 20s & 30s Beer and Pizza Night (October & November), Feast of Justice Packing Night (November).

Children and Family Ministries /Tween and Youth Ministries

Dana Harrison – Children and Family Ministries Director; Youth and Tweens Assistant

My ministries include but are not limited to working closely with the children, families, staff, and congregation of Gloria Dei Church. I plan and implement age appropriate spiritual and social activities for children and their families. For example: Sunday School classes, holiday

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events, social events, and Vacation Bible School. This year, we are using a new Sunday School curriculum called “Orange” whose approach is stronger foundation and lasting faith. The Orange curriculum aligns leaders and families to create community around the next generation to love God and serve others.

I recruit, train and support volunteers for programs involving my ministries. This includes providing them with the material/curriculum needed to teach classes or help at events and obtaining the proper clearances needed as the state requires.

I work closely with staff. I attend monthly meetings, and I am in constant communication with staff, keeping them all informed of events. This communication also includes the Preschool. I am teaching Chapel for our Christian Education classes once a month. The Preschool and I work together to keep each other informed of daily tasks.

I also keep the congregation informed of events through social media, emails, posters, and the bulletin. I work closely with staff in planning my ministries.

A team has been formed to help with the Tweens and Youth. We had a few meetings with Pastor Brendan and looking forward to kicking things off.

Church Council

David Blanton – President

This year, Church Council has been busy addressing many issues with pastor transition, responsibility, and personnel changes with an emphasis on looking to the future with hope.

We received two gifts from Gail Webb and Elsa Kling for the church and the preschool this year. Gloria Dei thanks them very much for their kindness. The estate of Nancy Seitz was finalized and GDC has received an additional \$200k which has been invested to secure the financial future of the church. Council is reviewing several ideas of projects and programs to utilize these funds. We shall be forever grateful to Nancy for her love in remembering Gloria Dei!

The election of this year’s Executive Council members welcomed Sara, who was new to Council. Council has tried to ensure that all church groups and committees have council liaisons for better communication. This process has led to the re-establishment of the Stewardship Committee, the Welcome Team, new Small Groups, and overhaul of the Sunday School program.

In the spring, Pastor Brendan lead a Council retreat where we started to establish short term goals for GDC and began the process of establishing long term goals. Through providence, hard work, and these special people, the process of establishing a direction for the future of the congregation will be accomplished.

As part of the transition of getting a new pastor in place, Council was tasked with reviewing all policies and procedures, church groups and committee functions along with obtaining a financial audit. We have started the process of improving communication and organization with the implementation of Church Center software, updating our website with special emphasis on proper and beneficial Social Media utilization, and communication within and outside the church community. The Youth Program has started up with gatherings and functions that are planned for the future. A job description has been established and the search has begun for an

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Assistant Pastor who will have an emphasis on Youth Programs. The search for a Music Director is in full swing with interviews and tryouts in progress. The pastor has completed the process to be ordained in the ELCA and Council will now have the task of starting the Call Process for a long-term pastoral relationship.

Staff and Council has increased utilization of the church facilities not in constant use. This includes outlying parking lots and buildings, Christian Fellowship Hall, the Chapel, Zabor Room, and some of the spare offices. Deferred maintenance of the Garden of Hope, sections of the building's roofs, HVAC systems, and windows are in process of remediation along with other grounds and facility upgrades. Also, after much time, aggravation, and money, the Sanctuary Lift will soon be in operation. Hopefully, the congregation is aware of all of these efforts.

There are many new programs planned and starting to happen at GDC with the help and participation of many current and future congregants. As my last year as Council President comes to a close, I want to thank the Congregation, Council, and Staff for all their hard work to make this happen. The future is just around the corner!

Endowment Board

Ginny Duffy – Endowment Board Chairperson

2024 Mission Guidelines: The Endowment Fund is a mission of Gloria Dei Church, acting under the umbrella of the Church to receive, invest and distribute money for religious, educational, and other charitable purposes. For those new to the Church, and those interested in how we work, we have attached the Mission Guidelines adopted by the Fund and approved by the Church Council in spring 2024. If you are interested in serving on the Mission Board, please contact Ginny Duffy at duffy.ginny@gmail.com.

Current Endowment: The Fund was established many years ago with donations from members of the Church and continues to grow with new donations and investment gains. As of October 11, 2024, the Endowment is approximately \$575,000.

2024 Grants: The amount available for distribution in calendar year 2024 is \$20,250. One of the favorite causes of the Fund over the years has been helping with education expenses of our Church family by making monetary grants to high school seniors heading to higher education in colleges and trade schools, to those doing continuing education in any field, and to Lutheran seminarians. In spring 2024 we made \$2500 grants to each of the two graduating high school seniors who applied and to George Miller, a Lutheran seminarian who has several times preached at Gloria Dei in the Pastor's absence.

We actively encourage any Congregant registered for continuing education outside the four-year college process to consider applying to the Fund for a grant to help with your expenses. The application form is attached to this report, and the 2024 application deadline is December 1.

We also look for charitable organizations and causes close to our Church ministries. With money still available for grants this year, we are looking at two causes: OHAAT's Beds for Kids program, where for \$210 per child, OHAAT can gift a child in the 5-county Philadelphia area who has no bed with a bed, pillow, bedding, book, and evening toiletries. The Pastor and Stewardship Committee will be talking to the congregation about a year-end fundraising effort

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to double the number of beds by adding member donations to the money available in the Endowment Fund. We are also exploring grants for displaced families in the Abington, Lower Moreland, and Upper Moreland School Districts.

Growth Opportunity Center (GOC)

Ken Barber, Jr. – Executive Director Emeritus

Under the leadership of Executive Director Judy Morrissey, GOC continued to provide mental health counseling, consultation, and educational services as an outreach program for the community started by Gloria Dei in 1974. During 2023, a group of seventy mental health professionals provided an average of over 3,000 visits each month. A majority of the visits were still by telehealth rather than in-person. The Administrative Team worked with their Board of Directors representing various parts of the community including a Gloria Dei pastor and a church member. A wide range of people have benefited from the comprehensive services of GOC. The Center helped individuals, couples, and families - touching the lives of children, teens, adults, and seniors. This outreach assists people from various ethnic and religious backgrounds living in Bucks, Montgomery, and Philadelphia counties. GOC continues to look for new programs and areas of need in order to effectively serve the community.

Hospitality

Dawn Frank – Hospitality Committee

- Started 2024 with a Holiday Party for the GDC Staff and Council in January.
- Hosted with wine and snacks for a “Meet the Artist” event on March 9. Wilma Kuhnle, her daughter, Marcia, and their fabric art were the stars of the show.
- Palm Sunday Easter Egg Hunt and Brunch for over 125 participants on March 24. Included food purchase and preparations, room setup and decorations, organizing numerous volunteers, serving, and cleaning up.
- Supported the Installation of Pastor Brendan, as Lead Pastor on April 7 with a Congregation Luncheon and cake to celebrate.
- Organized annual Flea Market on June 1, including numerous volunteers and merchandise from the congregants, setup, vendor spaces, selling out spaces to over 48 vendors, while raising \$1,700 for future youth activities.
- Participated in Greeter and Hospitality Volunteer Orientation on June 30 in support of the mission of welcoming people to GDC.
- On September 15, the Hospitality Team purchased and prepared food to celebrate the families and 125+ congregants returning after summer for the Fall Kickoff. This event also included support from Thrivent Financial. Volunteers involved in setting up tables and light cooking of food items, serving the food to facilitate the meal, and clean up.
- Provided Clergy Appreciation gift for Pastor Brendan and his family on October 13.
- Cake and punch celebration for Founding Members on Sunday, October 27.
- Sacred Grounds support throughout the year for the congregation on Sundays, providing an opportunity for coffee, treats, and fellowship time.

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Lay Ministry

Prior to her retirement in May 2024, Betsy Maier, the Lay Ministries Director, was leading Communion services at six senior residences once a month. We are happy to say that the church's traveling Lay Ministry Team has started going back in October to three of the facilities once each month. The facilities are Gloria Dei Farms, Luther Park, and Luther Woods. The team includes Brenda Crowley, Ginny Atlee, and Mary Beth Rodger. This team will also begin to include some individual Communion visits as their schedules allow.

Men's Ministry

Ken Barber, Jr. – Men's Ministry Committee

The Men's Group meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays each month at 8:30am in Sacred Grounds at Gloria Dei. Coffee and donuts are provided. This gathering is open to all men interested in fellowship and discussion of how faith relates to all aspects of life. The group offers a place for mutual sharing and support. We are all drawn together by a common goal of being active participants at Gloria Dei Church and in the community.

Missions

Ken Barber, III – Mission Team Committee

Gloria Dei is involved in many missions that focus on care and food insecurity with funds donated and set aside for specific missions.

- Missions Beyond our Walls
- Care Programs
 - One House At A Time (OHAAT)
 - Prayer Shawl Ministry
 - Care Bags
 - Laurel House
 - Socks for the Street (SFTS) - meets the basic needs of individuals facing homelessness and addiction throughout Philadelphia and the surrounding areas. SFTS builds trusting relationships and connects vulnerable communities with additional services to enhance well-being.
 - ELCA Lutheran Disaster Response -
- Food Insecurity Programs
 - **Feast of Justice** – Addressing Hunger, Meeting Needs, and Inspiring Hope as we work for Abundant Justice in Northeast Philadelphia and beyond.
 - Pantry Express Pick-up (PEP) packing - Volunteers put together boxes of dry goods to be distributed to families or work in the front foyer to give out the boxes and fresh food. Anywhere from 40-60 families typically receive food during a PEP shift.
 - **Somerton Interfaith Food Bank** – community-centered organization for families and individuals in need throughout Northeast Philadelphia with a mission to combat food insecurity in the Far Northeast.

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- **Caring for Friends** – shares food & friendship with homebound, homeless, & hungry people in greater Philadelphia.
- **Rise Against Hunger** – assemble over 10,000 meals to help families struggling with hunger around the world!

All the missions supported and started at Gloria Dei were initiated by members of the Church. If you see a need and you have a passion gather a group of friends and get involved.

Music Ministry

Chris Schmer – Music Ministry Leader

Summary: The Music Ministry continues to provide the church with an engaging, upbeat, and joyous experience of spirituality through our praise music. Many church members have commented that the music enhances the wonderful service, message, and weekly themes. They have enjoyed our specialty music, holiday music, as well as our contemporary band versions of traditional hymns, which has become a band staple. This musical mix allows us to create a tapestry of diverse music that has worked well for contemporary as well as single services.

Our Band Rotation Continues to Flourish: The rotation gives band members a rest and offers flexibility that keeps the music fresh, diverse, and energetic. Our band rotation approach also allows us to incorporate special guest performers such as Lisa, Daniella, and Jamie, which adds musical variety. We will continue with this approach, adding more guest performers during holiday and specialty times.

Special Shout Out... to my band volunteers who share their time and talent to perform the music we all cherish. Many members have devoted their talents now for multiple years, and I thank all of my team. 😊

to the Tech Team who has done an outstanding job adapting to the band's technical challenges and needs. They work closely and tirelessly with the band to elevate the band's front-of-house and stream sound. Their perspectives, suggestions, and technical guidance are invaluable. 😊

Challenges: 2024 has been particularly challenging for band members as they continue to play through uncertain times. With recent church changes to staffing and budget, indirectly and directly impacting the music program, members have remained patient and continue to put their heart and soul into the music. We have risen to this challenge by continuing to bring our best every week, even in capricious times. Our current team is beginning to gel and have brought one of our best years musically.

Looking Ahead: Here are a couple of key areas...

- We are excited to see the implementation of a new, modern sound system. We have begun to work closely with Tech to dial in personalized patches and monitors for each of the band members. We will begin using the new board in mid-November.
- As we enter into the fall, advent, and the holiday season, we will work with the pastor and church to align the music to provide an engaging, fun, spiritual church experience.

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One House At A Time - Beds for Kids

Ken Barber, III – OHAAT’s Chairman of the Board of Directors

Mission: One House At A Time’s (OHAAT.org) mission is to help families who are currently lacking resources to establish (or reestablish) a self-sufficient life by providing them with the necessities of a functional home environment. We focus on ending child bedlessness to improve overall health and wellbeing. Through the Beds for Kids program, children and youth in need receive high quality beds, bedding, and tools that encourage healthy bedtime habits, so they can get the quality and sufficient sleep they need to thrive.

The success of OHAAT’s Beds for Kids program depends on many partners: social service providers; manufacturers and retailers; community groups and individuals; volunteers; pediatric sleep experts; and health care providers.

History: Gloria Dei has partnered with OHAAT for over 20 years. In 2003 we started with a small group of volunteers helping to gather and deliver donated furniture. As the OHAAT mission grew, Gloria Dei became a significant financial donor, donated much needed storage space, and provided an ever-growing volunteer base. Several Gloria Dei members became involved with the OHAAT board and committees and helped steer the direction from furniture deliveries to the more critical need of Beds for Kids.

What started as a small non-profit delivering used furniture to a few families a month has turned into an organization that provides over 2,000 high-quality beds and bedding to children in need each year. So far this year, 2,257 beds have been delivered to 1,031 families with 3,174 volunteer hours. And it could not have been done without the support and vision of Gloria Dei.

Ways to get involved:

Donate Funds
Donate Goods

Priority Items Needed:

- New standard pillows
- New twin-size sheet sets
- New blankets and comforters

Other Items Accepted:

- New and gently used children’s books
- Gently used stuffed animals
- Gently used twin-size sheet sets
- Gently used blankets and comforters
- New dental hygiene supplies
- Period products

Volunteer:

- Warehouse events – pack bed-time bags, sort, and organize donations.
- Delivery events – deliver beds and bedtime bags to families.

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- Remote Opportunities – donation drives, wish lists, and fundraisers, no-sew blankets, handmade pillowcases, create book bundles, laundry donated stuffies, sheets, and blankets... be creative!
- Donate time and talent – volunteer committee plans and hosts dine and donate, health fair, book readings, and other events to help raise awareness.

Find out more at www.ohaat.org or contact Ken Barber III at Kenneth.j.barber@gmail.com.

Preschool Discovery Center

Melissa Whitman – Preschool Director

The Gloria Dei Preschool is in its 63rd year of operation. The preschool is a ministry of Gloria Dei Church, financially self-supporting, and gives a budgeted monthly donation. Yearly, we help support building projects and work with the church on maintaining the building. The preschool board is made up of church members, staff, parents/grandparents, the Director, Bookkeeper and Pastor. They support the director and guide school policies and programs. We are blessed to be able to offer this ministry at Gloria Dei, providing various preschool options for church members and families in the community.

We are here Monday through Friday, 8:30am – 2:30pm and offer part-time preschool classes for 2-, 3- and 4-year-old students. Currently we have 132 students enrolled in 2-, 3-, 4-, or 5-day classes. We offer two Christian education classes and multiple regular class options for parents. Our Christian Education classes attend chapel once a week and are led by the Christian Ed teachers. They bring fun and enthusiasm to the songs and bible stories the children learn each week. The preschool employs 19 Teachers and Assistant Teachers, as well as the Director, Administrative Assistant, and Bookkeeper.

We are licensed by the Department of Human Services and our staff is required to participate in 12 hours of continuing education on a yearly basis, as well as mandatory CPR, Fire Safety training, and Mandated Reporter Training. The preschool staff is made up of dedicated professionals who bring many talents to their classrooms. They plan fun engaging activities based on the PA standards for education and the interests and needs of the children, giving the preschoolers a great introduction to school. Gloria Dei is an inclusive school, and we enroll children with special needs who receive a variety of services from either the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit or Elwyn Services.

We offer Science Enrichment to the 4-year-old students and Gym and Music Enrichment to all our students monthly. We also offer Computer instruction to the 4-year-olds with additional Enrichment being offered to the 2:30 classes.

Yearly, we have Halloween Parades, a school-wide Thanksgiving service, a visit from Santa, a Christmas program presented by Christian Ed students and a Scholastic Book Fair, as well as various Community Service events. The fire fighters visit, along with the police, and we offer field trips to Solly Brothers Farm, Fox Chase Farm and Churchville Nature Center. Our 4-year-olds enjoy a play or in-house theater production in the spring. Lastly, we offer free vision screenings provided by the Montgomery County Association for the Blind. We end the year with a Family Fun Day offering food, arts and crafts, and games for our families and students.

In June and July, we offer summer camp for 7-8 weeks (approximately two classrooms) to our

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currently enrolled students.

Our days are busy, and we are blessed to provide a high quality, affordable preschool program to our local community.

Property

David Stryker - Facilities Manager

2024 has been both challenging and rewarding for the Property and Maintenance Teams.

CW Services continues to fulfill the housekeeping needs for the Preschool. CW Services is now currently providing floor care service for the Sanctuary, Christian Fellowship Hall, Zabor Room, Stage Room, Library and linked common areas for the Church. Bailey Cleaning Services continues fulfilling the housekeeping needs of the church and associated areas. I am very pleased with the services both companies are providing.

Elite Elevator Services continues to be our elevator service and maintenance provider. I am very pleased with Elite's quick response to all of Gloria Dei Church's operational and compliance needs.

EZ Living Concepts is currently in the final stages of installing a new replacement wheelchair lift in Sanctuary. Currently we are waiting for a final inspection date for the lift by State and Local Authorities. The release date for usage has yet to be determined but anticipate a date in the coming weeks.

Tom Adams Windows and Carpets is supplying and installing replacement window sashes throughout the facility. A test window sash and two window panels were placed in the Atrium for fitment and visual purposes in September. A window replacement count and measurements walkthrough are scheduled for November 7, 2024, to determine the quantity of windows to be replaced. The estimated count currently is 126. Scheduling for the window replacement project to be determined by the Property Team once all necessary information is acquired.

Robison Roofing continues to provide services regarding our now quarterly maintenance and inspection contract. Previously Semi Annually.

Manion Contractors have provided a quote to repair the lower-level Sanctuary entrance roof. Currently evaluating possible water drainage issue concerning this roof repair.

A new Zoll Auto External Defibrillator, AED, was purchased and installed in June 2024.

DTB Fire Protection is scheduled for our Annual Wet Sprinkler Inspection and Annual Fire Backflow Inspection November 27, 2024. Gloria Dei Church is now in full compliance with State and Local fire codes.

Atomic Extinguisher Service will be scheduled for our annual extinguisher inspection due in December 2024.

Apeldorn Landscaping and McCreesh Tree Service continue to provide service for our landscaping needs. Many efforts made this past spring by our Maintenance Team, Property Team, and contractors have provided us all with a much safer, more pleasing view and presence of our property.

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The dedication of our Property Team to provide a safe, productive, learning, and teaching environment for all continues.

Senior Ministry

Prior to her retirement in May 2024, Betsy Maier, the Senior Ministries Director, was working with Dana Harrison on the Lunch & Learn programs that were held in March, April, & May 2024. We are happy to say that Darice Eppinger has volunteered to continue this important ministry. Darice has scheduled two Lunch & Learns the third Fridays in November in December. The topic is Finding Joy During the Holidays: Parts 1 & 2 with Dr. Yvonne Kaye. Dr. Kaye is an award-winning international speaker, storyteller, radio host, mother, and grandmother. All ages are welcome to attend these community events.

Betsy and Dana also worked together on the Matinee & Munchies program held earlier this year in January, March, April, & May. A movie was watched by a group gathered in Sacred Grounds each month where they enjoyed each other's cinematic company and chocolate drizzled popcorn! This program may be starting up again.

Betsy sent out the "Gifts of Love" packages prior to her retirement as well. These went out this year for Valentine's Day and Easter. Dana sends out the Monday Mailing each week to Gloria Dei's homebound members who are unable to get to church for our programs. This mailing includes a HomeTouch Ministry paper, the church's bulletin from the previous Sunday along with any other pertinent information such as Congregational Meeting announcements, Holiday flowers, etc. Please contact the church office if you know someone who should be added to this list.

Tech Booth

Ken Barber, III – Tech Booth Team

Tech Team volunteers work behind the scenes assisting with the sound, video, and media presentations both in the Sanctuary and livestreamed to the GloriaDei.com website, Facebook, and YouTube. In addition to the weekly services, Tech Booth volunteers are called in to assist with life celebrations and other special events at the church.

There are several upgrades completed and underway in the Tech Booth:

- **Picture-in-picture added to livestream.** The media presentation and live action can now be viewed simultaneously by our at-home participants, providing a better viewing experience.
- **Preview mode added to media presentation.** Our media volunteer can preview the next slide in the presentation and easily jump to any slide in the presentation seamlessly.
- **Wireless microphone upgrade.** The old wireless mics transmitted on a frequency that was no longer supported by the FCC. The lavalier and handheld mics in the Sanctuary were upgraded and a new wireless mic was added to the Chapel sound system.
- **New digital sound board.** The old analog sound board has been failing with a lot of upkeep and repair needed to keep it running. If you have been in the Sanctuary

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recently, you may have noticed the new soundboard temporarily set up on a table next to the Tech Booth. Over the next several weeks, we will migrate to the new sound board.

- **Tech Booth expansion.** The original tech booth was designed for one individual to run the sound board. Today we have three volunteers that run the sound board, media presentation, and livestream video. The tech booth will be expanded to provide more space and a second exit for Tech Team volunteers. During construction, the new sound board, video equipment, and computer will be operated from a temporary location outside of the booth. Construction is scheduled to begin mid-November and be complete before Christmas.

Many thanks to the Tech and Property Teams. The labor for these projects has all been donated. A special thanks to Rick Graber for the many hours spent researching, learning, configuring, and training the team on the new sound board, and to Fred Betz for planning and coordinating the Tech Booth expansion.