

Corporation Treasurer's Report

1/1/2023-12/31/2023 (Also see attached financial report)

This is my 25th annual meeting as Corporation Treasurer for Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Inc. I became Treasurer in September of 1999 after appointment to the Council and gave my first report on January 20, 2000 at the Southside Community Center in Ithaca with 20 members plus additional friends present. We held Council elections at that annual meeting and the congregation elected me to my first two-year term. Quite a bit has transpired since then.

Some of the most notable changes during my tenure as Treasurer have been in our record keeping. The year 2000 brought an Accounts Payable format for monies due to the Council from our extensions in Syracuse, Elmira, and Ithaca. At that time, each extension had its own treasurer who worked with me to keep things running smoothly. In 2000, I developed Excel spreadsheets with budget categories. The Council printed these reports each month to be viewed by all. By 2003 we started using QuickBooks Pro for our bookkeeping and accounting. This made it much easier to keep track of the 3 banks and 6 accounts we had at the time. We continue to use that program today and have streamlined into just 4 accounts at one bank. Currently, the Council Treasurer manages all the finances of the corporation with Council oversight and guidance.

Fundraising certainly has been an integral part of our financial stability. We have sold buttons, stickers and other Pride items at festivals in Syracuse, Ithaca and Elmira. I recall Peg Walker, one of our Southern Tier foundresses, shouting "Cookies for the Lord" as she sold baked goods at Syracuse Pride. We raffled a weekend getaway donated by Veronica Floyd, and a rainbow afghan. We fundraised with Krispy Kreme donuts, poinsettias, candles, knitted items, and thousands of my peanut butter or caramel-filled chocolate eggs. Looking back at reports, I found our fundraising efforts paid all the local extension dues for 3 years in a row. Our Christmas candy sale in 2023 paid a full year of website maintenance as well. Fundraising in this manner provided us with community connections that helped support Ray Of Hope Church. As time has passed, we seem to rely more and more on donations from those who are regular, in-person attendees. We need to again form community connections with people who understand Ray Of Hope is a vital community resource they should support.

While looking through some past years' reports, I found my 2004 report presented at our January 2005 annual meeting. I pray you are inspired by this quoted section, in which I have inserted parenthesized and italicized updates.

["You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name." (John 15:16)

This is a powerful message for our congregation. What is the fruit that will last? I believe it is our ministry to people who are marginalized by society

and rejected by mainline church organizations. (***and for people who have never had a church family at all***). This ministry has continued long after all but one of the Ray Of Hope founders left their earthly homes to reside in Paradise (***all are now in Paradise with the passing of Robb Bacon in 2018***). It will continue long after many of us have joined them. We are called to spread the Gospel—the “good news,” not only to persons of all sexual orientations and gender expressions, but to anyone who needs to experience the Love of Christ. This is a huge job for us, but God is well aware that over the past two decades (***now four decades!***) we have ministered to hundreds (***now thousands***) of people through personal contact, phone contact, and the Internet. God knows that we have very limited financial resources and that most of the people whom we teach about the Gospel are financially poor. God knows that many members and friends of our congregation have given sacrificially of their time, talents and finances so that this ministry can continue. And because we continue to bear the fruit that will last, by spreading the Gospel to ALL people, we have been promised that God will do anything we ask in Jesus’ name.

We have many examples that God is fulfilling this promise Jesus made. I can list many things off the top of my head: (***The following are from 2004***)

- ◆ God provided us with buildings in Syracuse and Elmira.
- ◆ God healed Brother Benedict’s throat.
- ◆ God healed my mother of Hepatitis B and Cirrhosis of the Liver.
- ◆ God provided me with an extra job so I could help support the Elmira Building.
- ◆ God brought talented people to us to help renovate and decorate the buildings.
- ◆ God provided us with business opportunities for supporting our organization financially.
- ◆ God gave us several Eucharistic Miracles as physical manifestations of God’s Love for us.]

That was the end of the quoted section....So, what can you list? What has God provided to Ray Of Hope this past year?

In that same report at the 2005 annual meeting, I also quoted this scripture from Matthew 9:35-37:

³⁵Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. ³⁶But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because

**they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.
37Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. 38Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."**

Dear Friends in Christ, we have been praying for this for years—laborers to help expand this ministry in our community. This special Ray Of Hope ministry—"the fruit that will last"—has been passed on to us by the Founders and Foundresses in Paradise. Our job now is to pass on through this ministry the Good News of Salvation that is offered to ALL.

For a few years I have been ready to pass on the treasurer responsibilities to someone else and a year ago I stated 2023 would be my last as treasurer. I would like to give more time to some other things in my life plus Ray Of Hope needs some fresh ideas and talents. God provided us with just that in our two new Council members-Ed Askins and Christina McLaughlin. Not only that, but God also made sure one of those members had some church accounting and bookkeeping experience. Ed and I have been working diligently together to make a smooth transition, which officially will occur as of the Council meeting on January 26. Neither of us realized how much work this transition would be, but I have assured everyone that I will continue to support Ed as much as he needs over the next several months. Although I am certain I did this work to the very best of my ability, I look forward to watching Ed and the Council bring fresh ideas that will strengthen Ray Of Hope financially.

Thank you to everyone who supported me as the corporation treasurer for almost 24 and a half years. You not only supported this ministry with your financial donations, but you also trusted the financial stewardship of the Council. That's a mega amount of trust, and I thank you for it. Please continue to pray for and support the Council of Ray Of Hope. You do not need to be a member to attend the monthly meetings, present ideas and motions, or serve on committees. We need people of all generations to come forth with ideas and help that will take Ray Of Hope's message and ministry into the future for all people.

Let us "go and bear fruit—the fruit that will last."

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Frost, Corporation Treasurer (September 1999-January 2024)

Syracuse Pride Committee, Corporation Fundraising, Westcott Street Fair

We did not participate in Syracuse Pride or the Westcott Street Fair this year. It has been difficult to participate due to the cost and also the lack of people available to run a booth. We did have a table at both Elmira Pride and Corning Pride this year where we provided materials about our ministry to the public,

gave away buttons and stickers, and let participants decorate their fingernails with various dry polish nail strips.

We would love to entertain more fundraising ideas and would appreciate people coming forth to chair fundraising events. You do not need to be a Ray Of Hope member to present these ideas or chair events.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Frost, Committee Chairperson