

Thrivent Member Network – Mid America Region

# Network News

## About the newsletter

Network News provides financial insights, local stories, local partnerships and upcoming events happening in your region.

### Want to know more?

Visit us at:

[thrivent.com/member-network/mid-america](https://thrivent.com/member-network/mid-america) or at: [facebook.com/midamericaTMN](https://facebook.com/midamericaTMN).

## In this issue

Follow your heart—family ties

How to achieve financial goals:  
Short-term, long-term and everything  
in between

Choice Dollars® expire 3/31

A look at living generously in 2023

Education shout-outs

Calendar of events



## Follow your heart—family ties

Family means something different to everyone—we may include our immediate members, our extended family, or even our “found family” of close friends. For each of us, family members vary—you may have sisters, brothers, or no siblings. You may have a single parent, or multiple. You might have children, or none. Maybe someone other than your parents raised you. You may be adopted, or have adopted. You may foster, or have been fostered. You may consider friends your family, or even your pets.

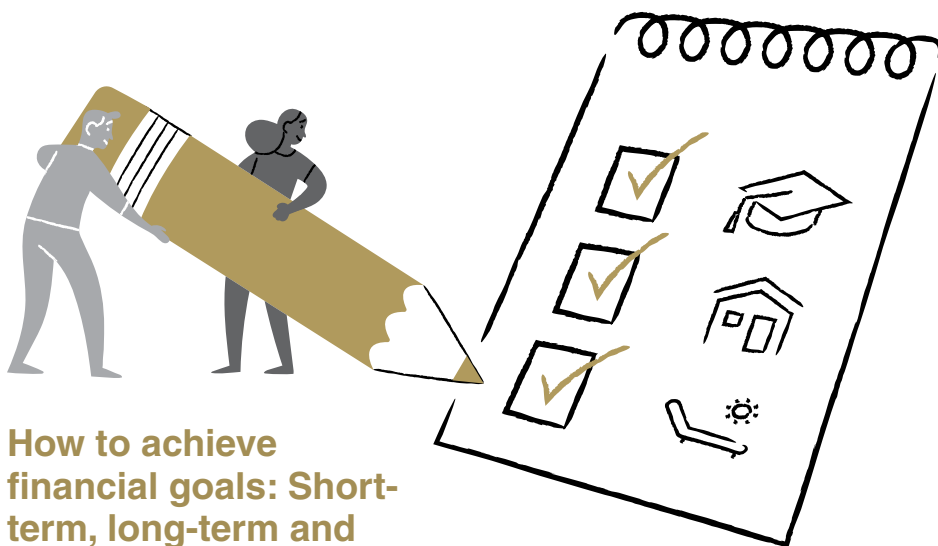
No matter who you call family, we know how impactful they are—like a woven tapestry, “family ties” us together. Sometimes the back of the tapestry looks a little messy, but it all

comes together in the end to make something beautiful.

We invite you to Follow Your Heart with a year focused on different aspects of “Family Ties.”

We’ll be highlighting organizations celebrating families like foster care support and elder care, financial education that addresses needs across multiple generations, events to bring the whole family to, and so much more throughout the year.

Get ready for “Follow Your Heart—Family Ties” to be a year you won’t forget! We’re looking forward to another year we get to Live Generously® and Thrive With Purpose™ together with you and those who you call family.



## How to achieve financial goals: Short-term, long-term and everything in between

As you look to the future, you can see yourself saving for a purposeful retirement, giving generously to your favorite causes and supporting your family through life's milestone moments. To achieve those financial goals, it helps to draw up a solid plan.

By setting meaningful, concrete objectives, you can treat your money as a tool to help you attain what matters most to you, your loved ones and your community. It's a process that takes patience, persistence and a series of thoughtful steps.

### Set SMART financial objectives

As you identify what you want to accomplish with your money, set goals that are **SMART**. The acronym helps you remember to make your goals specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound.

- **Specific:** Define each goal in detail. Ask yourself questions that begin with who, what, when, where, why and how. Your answers will help clarify what you hope to achieve.
- **Measurable:** Determine how you'll track your progress, in real numbers. Is success based on how much you deposit in a particular account? How often you take a certain action? How long it takes to reach a milestone? Markers along the way will ensure you're on the right path.

- **Achievable:** Set realistic goals. Don't aim to save \$1,000 a month if your income and expenses can't accommodate it. Instead, pick an attainable monthly savings target—whether that's \$500, \$100 or \$50. You could also set your savings goal as a percentage, such as 10% or 20% of your income; this can make it easier to stay the course as your income fluctuates.
- **Relevant:** Focus on the reasons your goals are important. Are you saving for an early retirement? Why? Do you have travel aspirations? Grandkids to care for? A post-retirement career you're eager to launch? If [goals are grounded in your values](#), you'll be more motivated to pursue them.
- **Time-bound:** Use target dates and timelines to track your progress. If you simply plan to save a certain amount by the time your child enters college, you might not hit your mark. Instead, set smaller savings goals as checkpoints along the way. Then, if your efforts don't keep pace with your plans, you have time to adjust.



### Consider short-term vs. long-term financial goals

Not all financial goals require extended timelines. It's important to identify objectives you can check off within a few months or years, too. Examples of [short-term financial goals](#) might include

paying off a credit card or setting up a budget. Such accomplishments can then help you reach [long-term goals](#) like paying off your mortgage or funding your kids' college education.



### Test for success

Make sure each of your financial goals passes your personal "acid test"—that it's truly valuable to you and you're willing to go the extra mile to make it happen. If you encounter hurdles along the way, you're more likely to clear them if you've already thought about what you'll do—or give up—to keep forging ahead.

A goal can be "Achievable" and still present some challenges. You'll want to anticipate obstacles and be ready to pivot. That may mean [building up an emergency fund](#), so you can leave other accounts alone if unexpected expenses arise. Or you might obtain [disability](#) or [life insurance](#) to make sure progress toward your goals continues in the event of illness, injury or death.



### Draw up your plan

SMART goals are a solid start. Next, you need a financial plan to map out the strategies to achieve them. There are a lot of perceptions around what it takes to make and [maintain a financial plan](#)\*. You can write everything in a notebook. You can build detailed spreadsheets and set phone alerts to prompt check-ins. Or you can work with a financial advisor to visualize a variety of strategies that evolve as you make progress and your circumstances change.



### Put your plan in motion

Once you have a plan, it will help you take action. Let's say your goal is to sock away enough money in two years to cover living expenses for six months. You plan to get there by [setting aside some income](#) from every paycheck. Now, it's time to open a dedicated account and set up automatic deposits. The financial plan inspires action to help you work toward meeting your goal.

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\*Thrivent provides advice and guidance through its Financial Planning Framework that generally includes a review and analysis of a client's financial situation. A client may choose to further their planning engagement with Thrivent through its Dedicated Planning Services (an investment advisory service) that results in written recommendations for a fee.



Sidestep roadblocks

Everyone hopes that their financial plan advances with minimal disruption, but stumbling blocks can arise—both within and beyond your control. For example, emergencies are outside of your control, but tapping your emergency fund for non-emergency spending is a block you can avoid. To help you avoid and recover from stumbling blocks, your financial plan could include establishing separate accounts based on specific financial goals or expenses.

And, of course, everyone faces setbacks sometimes, so don't view them as a reason to give up on your goals. Instead, see them as an opportunity to refine your approach.



Keep your emotions in check

Regardless of how well you've prepared, life will occasionally trip up your financial plans. Emotions may run high. That's natural. But strive to manage those reactions. Acknowledge any [feeling of financial stress](#), but don't let it fuel rash decisions that could alter your long-term trajectory.



Find your source of support

As you set SMART goals and draw up plans to reach them, consider all available resources. Connect with a [Thrivent financial advisor](#) for insights and collaboration. They can help you chart a path to achieving your financial goals—and give you confidence that your life goals will closely follow suit.

If requested, a licensed insurance agent/producer may contact you and financial solutions, including insurance may be solicited.

Direct your Thrivent Choice Dollars

Choice Dollars Expire 3/31

Some Benefit Members can recommend where a portion of [Thrivent's charitable outreach funds](#) go\*. It's your opportunity to spread joy to a cause you cherish. Need inspiration? [Our catalog](#) includes over 45,000 organizations. If you don't see the organization you would like to direct to, you can [nominate it](#) to be added. Choice Dollars from 2023 expire on March 31, so direct today!

To direct Choice Dollars, simply go to [thrivent.com/directnow](#).

One of the incredible aspects of Choice Dollars is that these funds are unrestricted for the organizations—so they can go where the organization needs it the most!

Hear from Julie Hatesohl on who she gives to and why:

"I direct my Choice Dollars to Lutheran Women in Mission (LWML). This organization uses these dollars to help fund mission projects for those in need. The LWML mission projects help people all over the world. It is a great opportunity for my Choice Dollars to be combined and grow to really make a valuable impact to others."

Curious? Learn more about [Membership benefits!](#)



The client's experience may not be the same as other clients and does not indicate future performance or success.  
\*Thrivent will pay up to \$300,000 in online processing fees per calendar year for personal donations made through Thrivent's online giving platform.  
The Thrivent Choice® charitable grant program engages Thrivent members in providing grants that support charitable activities, furthering Thrivent's mission and its purposes under state law. All grant decisions, including grant recipients and amounts, are made at the sole discretion of Thrivent. Directing Choice Dollars® is subject to the program's terms and conditions available at [Thrivent.com/thriventchoice](#).  
Member benefits and programs are not guaranteed contractual benefits. The interpretation of the provisions of these benefits and programs is at the sole discretion of Thrivent. Thrivent reserves the right to change, modify, discontinue or refuse to provide any of the membership benefits or any part of them, at any time.  
You should only purchase and keep insurance and annuity products that best meet the financial security needs of you and your family and never purchase or keep any insurance or annuity products to be eligible for nonguaranteed membership benefits.

A look at living generously in 2023



Thrivent Action Teams completed: 7,571



Funds raised: \$10,176,684



Volunteer hours given: 658,839



Choice Dollars® directed: \$1,058,019

Thank you for your generosity—you are making an incredible impact in your community and around the world!

More details and information to come in the spring newsletter.



## Education shout-outs

This past season you nominated educators for us to honor on our Facebook page. Each person featured is making a positive impact with their students and in their communities!

Here are some highlights:



**Jenni Owens**, PE Teacher

"We try really hard to make sure that our kids get in the movement they need for the day." Jenni also runs a non-profit, Upcycle Treasure Box—a creative reuse center that sells materials and resources by the pound. Jenni holds a Teacher Swap each year—for \$15 they can take as much out of the shop as they can carry!



**Alli Renfrow**, school-based speech language pathologist for kindergarten through second grade

"At times it can be challenging, but it is so rewarding to see my students learn to communicate better!"



**Jessica Sherman**, ESL high school teacher and head volleyball coach

"The entire world is inside the walls of my classroom and even though my students don't all speak the same language, come from the same culture, and believe in the same thing, in my classroom they are able to learn, practice, and grow in English, and they all understand the struggles they face day in and day out as they navigate acclimating to American culture, school, and ways of life."



**Christi Vernon**, early childhood special education teacher

"I work with a team of therapists to help students reach their unique potential. Every year, I am blown away at the progress I see in students that come with major communication delays."



**Jamie B. Wasser-Goforth**, educator for Madison County Safe School Program and ELA and FA educator at the Center for Educator Opportunities

"I have had the pleasure to work with some of the most challenging students in Madison County. I know I've made a difference."



**Stefanie Roy**, 25-year educator, current kindergarten teacher

"I want my students to grow to be lifelong learners no matter where their life takes them. I want them to go on to do great things in this world. But most of all, I want them to be good people. I hope that I have a small part in helping children do just that."

### Follow your heart

Build your career serving a unique clientele. Help others find a way to follow their heart. That's what the Thrivent financial advisor career is all about. No financial experience necessary, Thrivent has an incredible training program. [Learn more.](#)

Thrivent provides Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) without regard to race, religion, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, national origin, age, disability, marital status, citizenship status, military or veteran status, genetic information, or any other status protected by applicable local, state, or federal law. This policy applies to all employees and job applicants.



# 2024 Calendar of events

We love meeting friends and family. Invite and register them for an upcoming event! Thrive With Purpose™, together. For additional events, details or to RSVP, visit our website [thrivent.com/member-network/mid-america](https://thrivent.com/member-network/mid-america) or email [Mid-AmericaTMN@Thrivent.com](mailto:Mid-AmericaTMN@Thrivent.com).

## March

### 19 Market & Economic Update

These days, news about the economy seems to dominate the media. But should it influence the decisions you make regarding your financial strategy? Find out how to use the latest economic data to help you invest with greater confidence. Presented by David Royal, Steve Lowe and other Thrivent investment leaders.

**Virtual event**  
**11:30 a.m. CT**

### Savvy Tax Strategies

Learn how to avoid common mistakes when it comes to your investment portfolio, health care and estate strategies. The Savvy Tax Strategies workshop provides answers to the critical tax questions you must answer before retirement. Explore how to help dodge the Social Security “tax trap” and more.

**Monday, March 18, 6 to 8 p.m. ET**  
**Cooper’s Hawk Winery & Restaurant**  
**8080 Montgomery Road, Cincinnati, OH**

**Tuesday, March 19, 6 to 8 p.m. ET**  
**Malone’s Prime Events and Receptions**  
**3373 Bates Creek Road Lexington, KY**

**Wednesday, March 20, 6 to 8 p.m. ET**  
**502 East Event Centre**  
**502 East Carmel Drive Carmel, IN**

### Stay connected

To receive the most up-to-date information on events, activities and communication, please update or add your email address by logging on to [thrivent.com](https://thrivent.com) or calling 800-847-4836.

Thrivent is a membership-owned fraternal organization, as well as a holistic financial services organization, providing financial advice, investments, insurance, banking and generosity programs to help people make the most of all they’ve been given.