

NELSONCORPNEWS

JANUARY
2024

THE LINCOLN WAY

The President's way of goal setting and making New Year's Resolutions offers inspiration today. p4

2023: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

A comprehensive look at what happened in the financial world last year. p6

FEATURED CHARITY OF THE MONTH

NelsonCorp's Jeans for Charity Supports The Adopted Closet. p11



YOUR NELSONCORP TEAM



DAVID NELSON



EUGENE KRUEGER



VALERIE HILL



AMY CAVANAUGH



KENNETH NELSON



JACOB WOODCOCK



NATE KREINBRINK



JAMES NELSON



JOHN NELSON



ANDY FERGURSON



JAMIE HUGUNIN



MICHELLE EVERSOLL



AUSTIN ECK



TRAVIS MOREHEAD



MIKE VANZUIDEN



AMANDA SCHAVER



TABATHA WESTPHAL



MIKE STEIGERWALD



HANNAH VAN HYFTE



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

As we usher in the new year, it's a perfect time to reflect on our financial well-being and set meaningful resolutions for the months ahead. The dawn of a new year symbolizes fresh opportunities, a chance to reimagine our financial goals and steer our ship towards prosperity.

Consider crafting a realistic budget that aligns with your aspirations, whether it's saving for a dream vacation, building an emergency fund, or investing for long-term growth. Embrace the power of informed financial decisions, and perhaps explore new avenues of investment or revisit existing portfolios.

This year, prioritize financial literacy, seeking knowledge that empowers you to make sound choices about your money. Whether it's understanding the nuances of investment options or sharpening your budgeting skills, education is a key driver of financial success.

Moreover, cultivate mindful spending habits. Differentiating between needs and wants can lead to substantial savings over time. Small, consistent changes in your daily financial habits can yield significant results.

In 2024, let us commit to nurturing our financial well-being, embracing the challenges and triumphs that come our way. May this year be a journey toward greater financial resilience and prosperity for us all. Happy New Year!

Sincerely,

David Nelson

CONTENTS

04	Things to Note Important Items
04	Support our Community Check out what's happening in the area
04	The Lincoln Way President Lincoln had a wise outlook on goals that we can draw from in our own lives today
05	Aesop on Finances Aesop's Fables can teach us a lot about life, but this particular one can teach us about money as well
06	2023: The Year in Review A look at how each financial story last year turned out... and what that means for 2024
07	NelsonCorp Media Appearances An overview of the topics covered this month
08	On a Personal Note... Read what members of the NelsonCorp team have been up to
11	Answering "What If...?" How we can help answer any questions that might be causing stress or worry
11	Featured Charity of the Month Jeans for Charity supports The Adopted Closet

THINGS TO NOTE

Tax time is right around the corner and we have a quick and easy way to help you get your taxes done. Just drop off your 2023 tax documents and we will prepare your return and call you when it is finished. We'll ask a few simple questions and take a copy of your driver's license. No appointment needed!

SUPPORT OUR LOCAL CHARITIES & BUSINESSES

Check out what's happening at our area charities, businesses, and communities:

- L'Arche Clinton
- ImpactLife Blood Center
- Visit Clinton www.clintoniowatourism.com
- Visit Quad Cities www.visitquadcities.com

NelsonCorp Nuggets

49% of American women and 45% of American men begin taking their Social Security retirement benefits before they turn age 65.

*Source:
Social Security
Administration*

THE LINCOLN WAY

"I may walk slowly, but I never walk backwards." – Abraham Lincoln

Happy New Year!

Every January, my mind drifts to Lincoln's quote above. That's because this is the time when people set new goals for their lives. I'm going to lose weight. I'm going to quit smoking. I'm going to learn the piano. I'm going to retire. I'm finally going to write that book.

But we all know that, while goals are easy to set, they aren't always easy to do. Life is constantly throwing obstacles in our way. Distractions and setbacks abound. Sometimes the road to our goals curves unexpectedly. Sometimes the climb gets too steep. Sometimes we get stuck in the mud.

When this inevitably happens to me – or, I should add, when it happens to my clients – I always try to remember Lincoln's words. After all, there was a man who knew something about setbacks and obstacles. When he was 23, he tried his hand at business by opening a general store. It failed.

Next, he ran his first political campaign for the Illinois General Assembly. He lost the election. A decade later, he campaigned for a seat in Congress – but couldn't even get nominated. A decade after that, he ran for the Senate for the first time to no success.

Then, in 1858, he ran one of the most famous political campaigns in history – most notable for his seven debates against rival Stephen Douglas – but still lost.

Of course, you know what happened next.

You see, amid all those setbacks,



Lincoln also scored numerous victories. He eventually did get elected to the Illinois Assembly. He opened a successful law practice. He served one term in the House of Representatives. Sometimes, those victories were temporary. Sometimes, they were less grand than he hoped. Sometimes, they were mere stepping-stones to what he really wanted.

The older I get the more I realize how similar the road to our goals is to Lincoln's. There are wrong turns and false starts. Dead ends and cul-de-sacs. Pitfalls and pot-holes. Our progress may get interrupted or delayed.

But every time we take that next step –

Every time we measure progress not by time elapsed but by distance run –

We are doing what Lincoln did.

Walking slowly...but never walking backwards.

So, this year as you pursue new goals and embark on new journeys, I encourage you to remember Lincoln's words. Whether your goals be physical or financial, vocational or spiritual, you will achieve them. All you have to do is take the next step.

That way, when the next twelve months are up and people ask how your year was, you can answer with a single word.

"Lincolnesque."

From everyone at NelsonCorp, I wish you a Happy New Year! Make it the best it can possibly be!

One more thing. As you set new goals this year, never forget that my team and I are a resource that's always at your disposal. Whether you need financial advice or just someone to cheer you on from the sidelines, we are here to help. Nothing gives us more joy than to see you succeed!

AESOP ON FINANCES

As you know, this is a time of year when many people make New Year's resolutions. Lose weight, stop smoking, save more, learn a new skill, get more sleep, visit a new place, get finances in order, etc. You name it, chances are, someone has resolved to do it.

As a financial advisor, people often come to me for help with any financial resolutions they have – or resolutions that require some change in their financial situation to achieve. But often, people come only after they have tried and failed to keep those same resolutions on their own.

This got me thinking: Why are New Year's resolutions so hard to keep? In most cases, our resolutions are good for us. We want to do them. So why aren't they easier?

There are many reasons for this, but one of the most important can be best explained by Aesop's classic fable about...

The Dog and His Reflection

It happened that a Dog, after much hunger and long labor, had finally procured for himself a chunk of meat, and was carrying it home in his mouth to eat in peace.

On his way home, the Dog had

to cross a fallen tree trunk lying across a running brook. As he crossed, he looked down and saw his own reflection in the water beneath. Thinking it was another dog with an equally large piece of meat, he made up his mind to have that also. So, he snapped at the reflection in the water.

But as he opened his mouth, his own meat slipped out, fell into the brook, and was never seen by the Dog again.

While some have interpreted this fable to be a warning against greed, I look at it a little differently. Despite being halfway to his goal – enjoying a nice meal – the Dog became distracted by a different goal, and in pursuing that, lost sight of his own.

In my experience, this happens to most of us every year. We set a goal we want to achieve, something we truly care about. But it takes time to accomplish our resolutions, and it's very easy to get distracted by the newest, shiniest things. For example, imagine someone resolves to save \$200 per week, so that they can finally take that trip to the Caribbean they've always dreamed of.

But after doing this for three months, they see another person enjoying the latest iPhone that came out, so they decide to go for

that instead. After all, the Caribbean will always be there. So, they spend all the money they've saved – and suddenly, they've sabotaged their own resolution.

This happens on a larger scale, too. I've seen people who dream of a retirement spent in the sun... only to go chasing shadows instead. I've seen people with grand plans to start their own business one day...only to spend their time watching television.

Of course, there's nothing wrong with buying a new iPhone or relaxing in front of the TV. But to truly change our lives for the better, we must learn discipline. We must hold ourselves accountable. We must keep our eye on what's truly important, and not be distracted by reflections.

There are several ways we can do that. Here are a few I've found to be especially helpful:

1. Be specific with your resolutions. People who set specific goals are more likely to achieve them. For example, instead of resolving to save money, resolve to save \$200 per week.

2. Put it in writing. Write down your resolutions and post them in a place where you will see them every day. This will help remind you of what you're working towards, so you won't end up like the Dog in the fable.

3. Set realistic goals. Set goals that are within your reach, and don't try to take on too much at once. Be mindful of your finances and schedule. Account for the fact that sometimes, you need to kick back and relax or spend money on a whim.

In addition, take your time. There's no prize for finishing first, and anyway, to quote another

one of Aesop's fables, slow and steady wins the race.

4. Develop a plan. This is so important. Create a timeline with steps toward your goal. Set deadlines for each and cross them off as you go. This will help you generate both the momentum and the motivation you need to continue.

5. Ask for help. Whether it's with a financial professional or a life coach, if you find yourself struggling to reach your goals, don't think you need to do it alone! Find someone who can help keep you focused and accountable.

6. Reward yourself. Acknowledge even the smallest of achievements. Keeping resolutions is hard work, and you should be proud of everything you accomplish!

Regardless of what you do, always remember The Dog and His Reflection. It can make all the difference.

Good luck, and have a wonderful year!



NelsonCorp Nuggets

The average baby boomer in the U.S. has on average \$191,650 in mortgage debt. This does not include an average of \$25,812 of additional nonmortgage debt.

Source:
CNBC

2023: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Every January, it's customary to look back on the year that was. What were the highlights? What were the "lowlights"? What events will we remember? Most importantly, what did we learn?

As you know, many noteworthy and historic events happened in 2023. Conflicts in Gaza, Ukraine, and Sudan. India surpassed China as the most populous country in the world. New temperature records were set all around the globe. The use of "artificial intelligence" exploded and turned multiple industries on their heads. Chinese spy balloons and deep-sea submarines grabbed the headlines. The "Barbenheimer" phenomenon reinvigorated Hollywood.

But in some ways, one of the most notable occurrences of 2023 is actually what *didn't* happen: **We never entered a recession.**

When 2023 began, the fear of a recession was so widespread that it almost seemed inevitable. According to one survey, 70% of economists expected a recession to hit the U.S. in 2023. Another survey found 58% of economists believed there was a more than 50% chance of a recession. For politicians, pundits, and analysts, it was practically all they could talk about.

But it never happened. Instead, the economy grew by 2.2% in the first quarter, 2.1% in the second, and 4.9% in the third. (As of this writing, the numbers for Q4 are not yet available, but it's expected to go up again.) None of this is to say that our economy is perfect, or that we won't have a recession in the future. But for 2023, all the gloomy forecasts simply didn't come to pass.

Now, let's be fair to all those economists who got it wrong: They had *very good reasons* for expecting a recession. Reasons

based on data, logic, and history.

You see, when the year began, the U.S. was coming off a nasty 2022. While consumer prices were already coming down from their earlier highs, the national inflation rate was still 6.5%. Interest rates, meanwhile, had risen dramatically, from just above 0% at the beginning of 2022 to over 4% by the end. It was already the highest level we'd seen in fifteen years – just before the Great Recession, in fact – and every indication was that rates would continue to rise higher. All this economic pain was reflected in the stock market. The S&P 500, for example, dropped over 19% in 2022.

For economists, all this data seemed to point a clear way forward. The Federal Reserve is mandated to keep consumer prices as stable as possible. (Its target has long been to hold inflation to around 2%.) When inflation runs hot, the Fed's main tool for lowering it is to raise interest rates. Higher rates often lead to lower consumer spending. Lower spending, in turn, prompts

businesses to decrease the cost of the goods and services they provide. Essentially, higher rates create an environment where **supply** is greater than **demand**, thus cooling inflation.

But there's a side effect to this. If spending drops too much, businesses are often forced to cut back on expansion, investment, and labor costs. This leads to a rise in unemployment...and a contracting economy. In short, a recession.

This string of events isn't just logical. It's supported by history. When inflation has skyrocketed in the past, the Fed's playbook has usually worked to bring prices down...but it's usually triggered a recession, too. Economists call this a "hard landing."

Take a look at these two charts. The top shows interest rate levels since 1955. The gray bars indicate a recession. Notice how often a gray bar appears in the aftermath of a sharp rise in rates? Similarly, the bottom chart shows the unemployment rate. See how the gray bars always

coincide with a major spike in unemployment? It's clear that, historically, fast-rising rates often trigger a rise in unemployment...which contributes to a recession.

What about when prices come down, but the economy does not? Economists call that a soft landing, and it's proven to be very difficult to achieve. It's no surprise, then, that most economists predicted a hard landing in 2023.

One year later, that hasn't happened. Interest rates *did* continue to rise. As of this writing, they're at 5.3%. Inflation *has* continued to cool, albeit slowly. As of November, the inflation rate was 3.1%. That's a 3.4% drop from the beginning of the year. But consumer spending has remained steady. The labor market has remained strong. The unemployment rate was only 3.7% as of November. And, as we've already covered, the economy has continued to grow.

From a financial standpoint, *this*, to me, is the major storyline of 2023. Which means we have to



ask ourselves: "What can we learn from it?" As your financial advisor, I've taken the time to jot down a few lessons I think are worth remembering as we move into the New Year. Here they are:

#1: Always emphasize preparation over prediction.

The economists who predicted a recession weren't stupid. They used the best data they had to make the best predictions they could. But 2023 shows that even the most well-informed people simply *can't* see the future. Even the near future! There are simply too many variables to consider. That's why, as investors, we have to always emphasize planning over predicting. We can't predict when the markets will drop nearly 20%, as they did in 2022. Or, when they'll rise by well *over* 20%, as they did in 2023. What we *can* do is plan ahead for what *we'll* do if the markets fall, or if they rise. We can prepare mentally and financially for both market storms and market sunshine. So that we can weather the former and take advantage of the latter.

When we predict, we're essentially swinging for the fences on every pitch. Occasionally, a prediction can lead to a home run...but it can also lead to a lot of strike outs. By planning, we don't have to swing at all. Since we can't control the situation, we simply make the best out of *every* situation. We control only what we can control - ourselves.

#2: Be wary of confirmation bias.

Earlier in the year, I spoke to many people who were convinced a recession would happen. Because of that, they tended to disregard all data that pointed away from a recession, and only valued information that confirmed what they already believed. As a result, many investors missed out on a stellar year in the markets! This is another example of why preparing is so much better than predicting. It removes emotion

from our decision-making. Because we're not so focused on "being right," we can focus instead on "being ready!"

#3: Remember that past performance is no guarantee of future results. You've probably seen this line in the past, and 2023 is a great example of why. Just because rising interest rates have led to recessions in the past doesn't mean they *always* will. Just because the markets went one direction yesterday doesn't mean they'll go the same direction tomorrow. While history is a great resource to draw from when making decisions, it's just a guide, not a guarantee.

#4: At the same time, don't anchor to the present. As humans, we have a natural tendency to think that the way things are today is how they'll be tomorrow. When 2022 ended, many investors felt that 2023 would be much the same. Now, we run the risk of thinking that just because a recession didn't happen last year, it won't happen *this* year.

Again, it all goes back to planning and preparation. Here at NelsonCorp, we will continue to *prepare* for all possible outcomes. We'll plan for how to reach the outcomes we want and avoid the ones we don't. But instead of predicting, instead of assuming, instead of anchoring, we will accept that the future is written in clay, not stone. Only when it becomes the past does it harden. So, when you get right down to it, the lesson of 2023 is this: The future is flexible, and so we must be flexible, too. By doing this, we can continue shaping your future into whatever it is you want it to be.

So, that's 2023! I hope it was a wonderful year. On behalf of my entire team, I look forward to making 2024 even better. Have a Happy New Year!

NELSONCORP MEDIA APPEARANCES

Be sure to catch our weekly educational content featured locally on television, radio, and the newspaper. You can get this and more at www.nelsoncorp.com/blog.

On 4 Your Money, John Nelson spoke about the housing market and mortgage rates and what that could mean for the economy. David Nelson spent some time discussing interest rates, specifically when it comes to the bond market. He explained there are many variables that come into play with bonds and made listeners aware that bonds have their own risks to consider. In another segment, he went into detail on what factors could be driving the markets. Nate Kreinbrink joined on a different segment where he talked about market sentiment and what that could mean for different investments.

This month on Financial Focus, David Nelson went into a lot of detail about different indicators we use and what they were showing us. He also talked about how the work we do links investing with financial planning, tax planning and tax preparation, Medicare, estate planning, and more. Nate Kreinbrink stressed the importance of looking at your retirement plans through your employer and understanding what percent or dollar amount you are contributing and what amount your employer contributes to take full advantage of their match. He also let listeners know that after the money is in those accounts, it needs to be reviewed to make sure it's allocated most appropriately for current conditions. Nate also sat down with Andy Fergusson to talk about gearing up for tax time, end of year deadlines, as well as the contribution changes for 2024.



4 Your Money airs Tuesday mornings on FOX 18 News at 8am and on WHBF CBS Local 4 News at around 6:10pm.



Financial Focus airs every Wednesday at 9:00 am on KROS FM 105.9 and AM 1340.



David Nelson is a guest columnist every 1st and 3rd Saturday in the Clinton Herald.

ON A PERSONAL NOTE...

DAVID NELSON

Sally and I have been enjoying watching the Hawkeyes this basketball season. We have made a few trips to games, some with our grandkids, and it has been a blast. We love being able to share these special memories with them.

We were also so happy to see those of you who were able to attend the events at the Symphony of Lights and Eagle Point Lodge. It meant a lot that so many of you donated to our food and toy drive, even if you couldn't make it to the Lodge. It was a huge success and it's all because of your generous contributions!



EUGENE KRUEGER

Welcome to the New Year! I'm hopeful that everybody was able to get through their holidays without turmoil and enjoy the beauty of that season. On December 1st, Susan had her first Hole-in-One! What a thrill for her.

Susan and I flew back to Iowa for Christmas and quite fortunately

the weather cooperated. It was wonderful to see family and friends as well as to get into the NelsonCorp offices multiple times. I'm going into year 44 in the financial services business. I'm obviously in a different capacity than the first 40 but being able to still share time with the advisors, staff and client base is what gets me up in the mornings. Have a wonderful 2024 and thank you all for your business and especially for your friendships!



KEN NELSON

As promised a few months ago when I mentioned that our twin granddaughters were going to be flower girls in a wedding in Galena, here they are! They did an exceptional job. Could not have been more proud of them. And can you believe it, they just turned three years old on December 17th. Where has the time gone?



Our other granddaughter just had a birthday on November 24th and she is now three as well. Here is a recent picture of her helping

Nana bake some Christmas cookies. What a great job she did as well. Flour and cookie decorations flying everywhere! I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas, and here's wishing everyone a happy and healthy New Year!

AMY CAVANAUGH

Happy New Year. We had a great Christmas spending time with family. We are blessed with four grandchildren and just managed to get a photo of all of them together. We are looking forward to welcoming another grandbaby in March. We are planning a trip to the Florida Keys at the end of February and look forward to the warm weather and sunshine. And maybe some fishing too. I wish you all good health and happiness in 2024.



NATE KREINBRINK

Happy New Year!!! Hard to believe another year has flown by, and hopefully everyone had a very Merry Christmas. We were able to make it back to my parent's house back in Ohio over Christmas. Winter travel with weather is always a concern, and thankfully mother nature cooperated this year.

We have been busy with basketball schedules, as Emerson and Braxtyn are in the middle of their seasons, which means nearly every evening is a practice or game. Alijah is in his last semester at Clarke University and is excited to finish

up his degree later this spring and start another golf season. Ash has settled into her new role outside the classroom with the AEA and enjoys working one on one with the kids. Outside of work I am coaching Braxtyn's basketball team, and it won't be long before we shift the focus to baseball – and warmer temperatures! I wish you all a great start to a new year.



JAMES NELSON

Hello everyone! I hope you all enjoyed the holiday season. It was wonderful seeing a lot of you at our office Christmas parties. Things have been busy at our house. Between basketball, volleyball, gymnastics, and school activities, our girls have been active. We have also enjoyed going to several Iowa Women's basketball games recently. They are fun to watch!

I hope you all enjoyed family this holiday season. I look forward to seeing you in the office soon. Happy New Year!



JOHN NELSON

During this festive time of year, I'd like to extend my warmest wishes to you and your loved ones. Although we experienced some illness over Christmas, we enjoyed time together and had fun celebrating Will's fifth birthday on December 27th. Both he and Isabelle are enjoying their extended school break. They are missing the snow more than many of us and would love to be using their sleds soon!

I wish you all a very happy and healthy new year!



JAKE WOODCOCK



It seems like winter might finally be here after the weather having been so cooperative this late in the year. It has allowed us to finish up some outdoor projects, which has been great. It will be our first winter with a fully occupied barn, so there has been a lot to do.

Gabriel's chicken operation has come along, and he is working to keep friends and family supplied with eggs. Everyone pitches in to take care of the horses, pigs, cats, and dogs and all seem to be doing well. I can't say that any of

us are really excited about these short days though.

I hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and I will see you all around the office!

VAL HILL

Happy New Year from the Hill's!

Drumroll.....our kitchen project is done! 10 months and a few hiccups along the way but it's finished and looks fabulous! Now Alan can move on to the next thing on his "honey do list".

Alan and I went up to La Moure, ND to see some of my family a few months ago. One of the many hats my nephews, Josh and Jake wear is owning a local tire shop, BIG tires for monster sized equipment like combines and semi's. I offered to work at the front desk and answer phones one day. Here is a picture of my first customer of the day!! He was within inches of the building. What a fun experience!



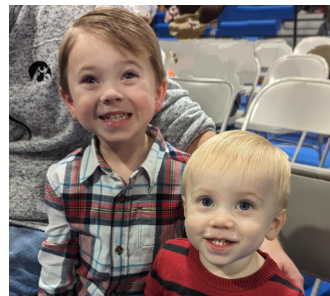
JAMIE HUGUNIN

As I write this, we haven't yet had Christmas. Brian and I are looking forward to Christmas with our boys. Watching them open Christmas presents brings so much joy. This year Miles is just shy of 4 years old, and Everett will be 2 in March. Opening gifts Christmas morning should be so much fun.

Miles just had his first Christmas concert. Watching him and his friends sing just melted our hearts. Miles is enjoying school and has brought us home several crafts! Everett is learning more and more and seems to add new words to his vocabulary every day. He is always trying

to keep up with big brother and has started counting with us. The boys' favorite activities are playing tag and hide-and-seek.

Miles and Everett had their photos with Santa again this year. Last year Everett was very curious about Santa, but he liked him. This year he was not a fan! Miles on the other hand, was a little shy last year, but this year he adored him. Oh what fun it is to watch our children grow! I hope you all have a Happy 2024!



MICHELLE EVERSOLL

2023 flew by in the blink of an eye. We celebrated our grandson's first birthday in December, and it has been so much fun watching him grow and learn so many new things throughout this last year. My husband and I truly love our new title of "grandparents" and we can't believe how much love and happiness our little "Bubba" has brought into our lives. The picture I chose to include is the two of us with our precious little guy. Wishing all of you a joyous New Year ahead!



MIKE STEIGERWALD

Happy New Year! Hopefully, everyone had a happy and healthy holiday season filled with time spent with loved ones. Our family traveled to Chicago

for a few days to visit family before Christmas, and we had a wonderful time. My sister hosted a "Cousins Christmas" party at her home, and it was a great to be with everyone there. Our boys really enjoyed going out and seeing all the Christmas lights and decorations. Here is a picture of them exploring the Quad City Botanical Center in Rock Island.

We traveled back to the Quad Cities on Christmas Eve to get home for Christmas morning. The highlight of Christmas was when Santa came to our house and brought some toys and goodies for our boys William, Joseph, and Thomas. They were so excited and have stayed busy playing with their new toys since Christmas morning! It was great to see everyone at our Christmas party, and I look forward to seeing you all again soon.



TRAVIS MOREHEAD



Happy New Year, everyone! I hope you all had a wonderful holiday season. I was able to enjoy several family get-togethers this year. During Thanksgiving, my nephews came with us to cut down a Christmas tree for my parent's house. They love to

ON A PERSONAL NOTE...

run around and find the perfect tree. They also were able to see Santa, which made them very happy. Just prior to Christmas, my family went to my brother's home near Chicago to celebrate the twins' third birthdays. The theme was all about dinosaurs. They were all about it! I also had a wonderful time at Christmas with the family. I don't know about you, but there's nothing better than giving gifts to your loved ones. Into 2024, I am looking forward to new adventures and opportunities that lie ahead.

AMANDA SCHAUER

Happy New Year, everyone! I am certainly looking forward to 2024! This fall I went to Cabo San Lucas. I enjoyed pool time the most! We took a boat ride, saw The Arch, and a few sea lions. I held a baby sea turtle that was three hours old and watched as the baby turtles were released into the ocean. Here's a picture of one of the gorgeous mornings from our balcony. I also enjoyed listening to the sounds of the waves crashing while reading at night. It was wonderful to relax and get away for a few days.



AUSTIN ECK

Season's greetings! We've been quite busy to close out the year. Our eldest daughter, Emma, recently had her 5th grade band concert. She's made a ton of progress in her first year of learning to play the flute and thoroughly enjoys the

experience. Lily, our youngest daughter, continues to shine at ballet. We had a wonderful time watching her dance at the Holiday Showcase recital. Here's a snapshot of her gracefully executing her best dance move (my wife informed me that it's called an "arabesque").



HANNAH VAN HYFTE



Happy New Year! My fall and winter have been pretty quiet with most of my free time being spent reading. I exceeded my reading goal for 2023 with 96 books and set the bar a little higher this year at an even 100. We'll see how I do. My husband and I enjoyed a slightly early Christmas with our kids, Madison and Tyler and Madison's boyfriend Cooper, this year due to Jason's work schedule, but it was so nice to have that time together.

One really big piece of news in the Van Hyfte house is that our son turned 16 over his Christmas break and got his driver's license! I'm looking forward to him being able to get himself around while at the same time nervous about

him getting himself around. Now that this milestone has been reached, the next one will hopefully be that he finds a part-time job.

ANDY FERGURSON

I can believe 2023 is already over! Delainey, our oldest, will be serving a fulltime mission for our church to Wellington, New Zealand! She leaves at the end of January for 18 months. She couldn't be more excited, and we couldn't be prouder. 2024 will also be a graduation year (like every even numbered year until 2034), this time it's Mikaela's turn. We can't wait to see what adventure awaits her.

Everything else is pretty "normal", school, church groups, sports, clubs, orchestra, choir, etc. It's kind of a circus, but who doesn't love a good circus? I am getting excited for the tax season as well. Although it is a grind it is fun to see everyone come through the office. I hope your holidays were filled with loved ones and memories. I will see you soon.



MIKE VANZUIDEN

Winter is knocking on our door. This also means tax season is right around the corner. It feels like tax season just ended about two weeks ago. The year sure has gone by quickly. This fall, Christy and I were able to make a couple of weekend trips to our alma mater, Illinois State University to celebrate homecoming, take in a couple of football games, and enjoy some Redbird volleyball as

well. We always enjoy our trips there. Recently, we were also able to enjoy a comedy show at the Adler Theater. Nate Bargatze is a favorite, and he certainly did not disappoint. I guess you could say that we are finding that this empty-nester thing isn't so bad. Our adult kids are out spreading their wings and making us proud every day. I hope that your holiday were filled with joy and that 2024 brings abundant blessings to you all.



TABATHA WESTPHAL

Happy New Year everyone! Hopefully everyone's year is starting off right. We rang in 2024 down in New Orleans and it was quite the experience to say the least. Everything has slowed down as far as sports go for the kids, which is just in time for tax season. I'm excited to be seeing everyone come through the office in the next few months. Hope you all have a happy and healthy New Year!



ANSWERING “WHAT IF...?”

There are many questions people tend to ask at some point in their life. For example, many kids will eventually wonder, “Is Santa Claus real?” Teenagers ask themselves, “What should I be when I grow up?” And for adults, the Big Question often is, “Will you marry me?”

But there's one type of question that everyone will eventually ask – and likely, ask it throughout their lives. That question, of course, is: “What if?”

What if X happens?

What if Y doesn't happen?

What if I do Z?

Nobody knows what the future holds. That's what makes life exciting! But it's also what makes life feel uncertain, even scary. That's especially true when it comes to finances.

In my experience, “What if” is a question that becomes especially important in and around retirement. What if my spouse loses their job? What if I don't have enough money to retire or stay retired? What if something happens to my health? What if my kids need money? What if I have to dip into my principal? What if the stock market goes down? What if I never get the chance to travel? What if I'm spending too much and will outlive my savings?

These questions can keep us up at night. They can cause genuine stress and worry. They can make your financial goals feel further away than they should.

As your advisor, I don't want you to have any financial “what if” questions. You should also never have to wonder, “What then?” or

“What now?” Instead, you should have answers, plans...and solutions.

That's why I'm writing this article. As we enter a new year, I want to know if you have any “What if” questions weighing on your mind.

Is there anything you feel uncertain about? Any potential problems, headaches, red flags, or concerns that make it just a little harder to sleep at night? Anything in the near – or far – future that makes the thought of retirement sparkle a little less?

Or maybe there's some areas of your financial life that you worry may need more attention. We can discuss any of the below – or any that are on your mind that aren't listed.

- ☐ Secure more consistent income
- ☐ Improve my cash flow
- ☐ Lower my investment risk
- ☐ Get my will and estate plan in order
- ☐ Minimize my tax burden
- ☐ Build an emergency fund
- ☐ Rollover my 401(k)

If so, I want to address them.

We can handle any “What ifs” during our next regular review or you can call to set up an appointment before then.

When pondering your financial goals, let's remove any and all “What if's.” Instead, let's replace them with another, better question:

“Why not?”

I look forward to speaking with you soon!

THIS MONTH'S FEATURED CHARITY IS THE ADOPTED CLOSET



The Adopted Closet, in Dewitt, IA was started in 2021 by adoptive mom, Brittany Johnson. She takes in donations of previous loved clothing and resells them out of her garage. The money is used to help families with legal fees associated with adopting.

Now that the word is out in the community, posted in church bulletins, and announced through local organizations, Brittany's home is a regular drop-off site for anyone who wants their gently used things to be sold for a wonderful cause.

Last year on National Adoption Day, proceeds from sales at The Adopted Closet enabled Brittany to assist with 13 adoptions in the area.

Financial donations can be mailed to:

The Adopted Closet
814 10th St.
DeWitt, IA 52742

JEANS FOR CHARITY

Every Friday, the team at NelsonCorp Wealth Management wears “Jeans for Charity”. In exchange for getting to wear jeans to work, we each pay a \$5 weekly fine. At the end of the month, the fines are donated to a charity. NelsonCorp will match the fines that are collected, up to \$250.



880 13th Ave N, Clinton, IA 52732

PLACE
STAMP
HERE



NelsonCorp
Wealth Management

www.nelsoncorp.com

880 13th Avenue North
Clinton, IA 52732
(563) 242-9042

info@nelsoncorp.com

5465 Utica Ridge Rd
Davenport, IA 52807
(563) 242-9042

fax: (563) 242-9062

9079 East Tamarack Drive
Dubuque, IA 52003
(563) 242-9042

Securities offered through Cambridge Investment Research, Inc., a Broker/Dealer, Member FINRA/SIPC. Investment Advisor Representative, Cambridge Investment Research Advisors, Inc., a Registered Investment Advisor.

Cambridge does not offer tax advice. Indices mentioned are unmanaged and cannot be invested into directly. Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Investing involves risk. Investors should be prepared to bear loss, including loss of principal.

Cambridge and NelsonCorp Wealth Management are not affiliated.