



Vernon Alliance

CHURCH

ANNUAL REPORT
2023-2024

REPORT OF THE LEAD PASTOR

We want to see the church, the Okanagan, and the world fully alive in Jesus. Therefore, we partner with the Holy Spirit to build communities, equip for life, mobilize for the mission, and facilitate God-encounters.

(Vernon Alliance Vision and Mission)

God likes growing stuff. It should come as no surprise that Jesus calls his father "a gardener." From mature, Jesus-reflecting human beings to thriving families to healthy local churches to welcoming and connected neighbourhoods, the Kingdom of God naturally bears fruit wherever it takes root. What's wonderful, mysterious, and humbling is that the Gardener recruits us, his people, to do the sowing, tending, and reaping work along with his Spirit. As we reflect on the '23-'24 ministry year, it's encouraging to see evidence of that partnership all around us. Although this report is designed to help you discover the details, consider just a few signs of life that give me encouragement these days.

First, we have continued to recognize our dependency on the Spirit by prioritizing prayer. This year, dozens of us (including our entire staff team) were equipped to listen to his voice through Hearing God. Hundreds more saw God answer probable and impossible prayer requests during our Big Asks initiative in January and February. Looking ahead, we will continue this priority with a new, church-wide prayer initiative designed to backstop everything we do.

Secondly, since we care about the well-being of our city, we made significant investments in organizations like the Upper Room Mission, Sleep in Heavenly Peace, Good Food Box, and the Archway Society for Domestic Peace. Through our new Family Pantry program launched this winter, we are working for the food security of 37

new families in addition to what we are doing through Common Threads.

Third, since we care about the world, we've increased our financial support for the global work of The Alliance Canada and initiated two new partnerships investing in indigenous women in Western Canada and French immigrants to Quebec. Not only that, we commissioned 2 small missions teams: one to work with immigrants in Metro Vancouver and another to visit Travis and Erin Wilkins in Southeast Asia. This has ramped up our anticipation for another youth missions trip to Central America in 2025.

Finally, we have grown as a congregation this year, but not just on Sundays! With nine new groups launched this year, many more of us are connecting with Jesus and one another outside our weekend service experiences.

To each one of you who have made sacrifices for and invested in the harvest this past year, let me say, "Thank you!" Annual reports are more than just a way to recap a ministry year. They are a way to discover and celebrate what God is growing in our section of the vineyard. So read on and be encouraged! And, once you're done reading, ask him again how he might be inviting you to get in on the garden work. As Paul said in Galatians 6, "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." With expectation,

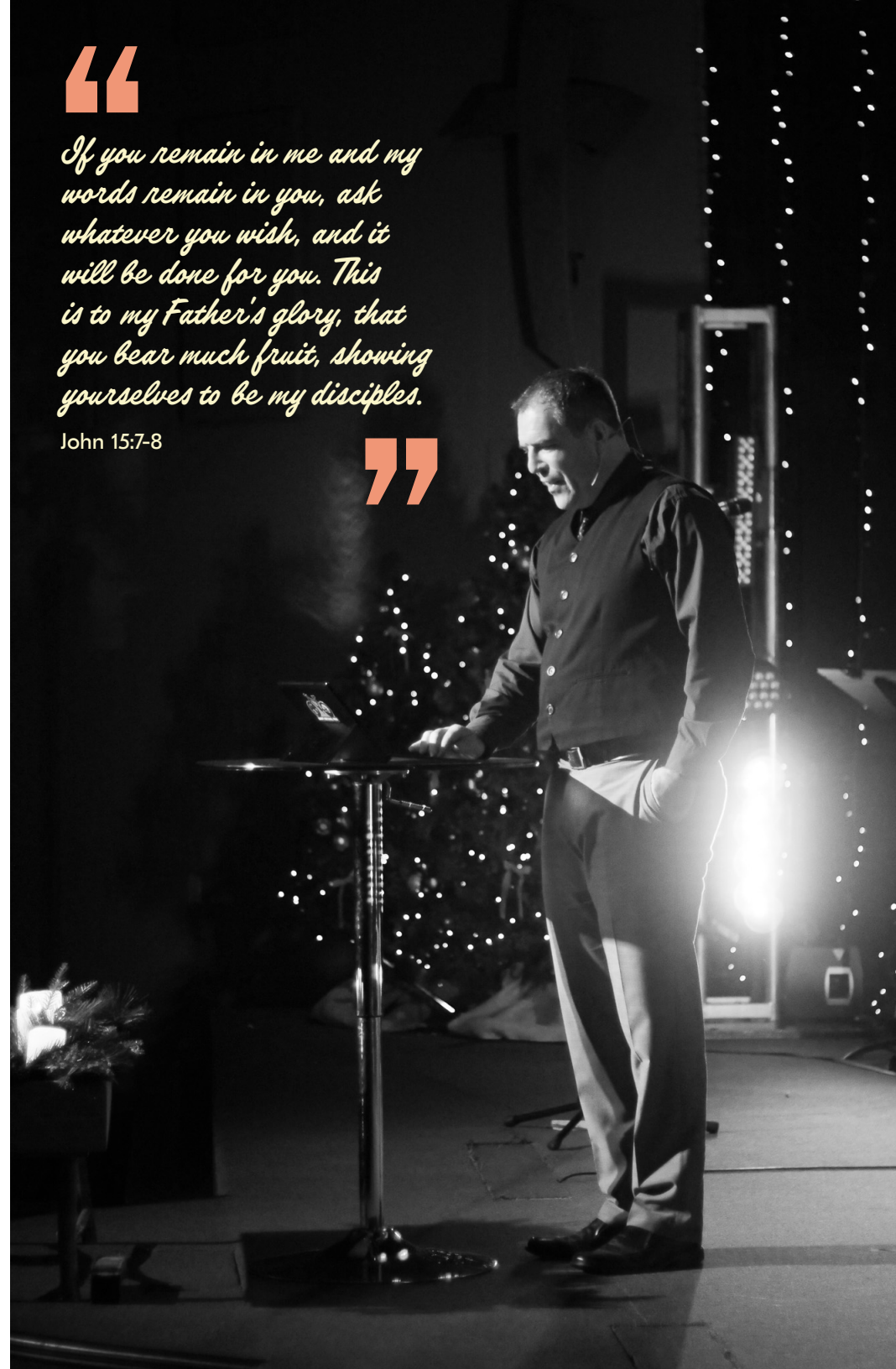
Jason Koleba
Lead Pastor

“

If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

John 15:7-8

”



WE WANT
TO SEE THE

CHURCH, OKANAGAN, & WORLD

FULLY *Alive*

We partner with the Holy Spirit to

BUILD
Communities

EQUIP
For Life

MOBILIZE
For the Mission

FACILITATE
God-Encounters

ELDER'S YEAR IN REVIEW

Let me first begin by expressing our deepest gratitude and appreciation to our staff. You have served with servant hearts and have led us well. To our volunteers, we would not be the church we are today without your many hours of sacrificial service. Your service is noticed and is deeply appreciated by your leadership. We need each person's investment to become a people fully alive in Jesus. Thank you for all you have done this past ministry year.

This past year has been a full and stretching year for us as elders. We have needed God's insight and guidance to lead us as we have navigated the varying nuances of church life. And He has been faithful.

Please find the full Elders Report in the Supplemental Annual Report Document.

Respectfully submitted by Len Wedel (Chair) on behalf of the Board of Elders



From left to right: Shelley Reeves, Steve Willett, Barb Nudd (Treasurer), Jason Koleba, Barb Elgin (Secretary), Keith Schiehl, and Devon Carbol.

Not pictured: Len Wedel (Chair), Jas Parr (Vice Chair)

BUILD COMMUNITIES

While Sunday services are the primary way for the church as a whole to come together, they are not the only way we connect. People are unique, and our community reflects that! There are ministries for kids, youth, young adults, men, women, 55+, and seniors, each with its own distinct style.

Some people prefer to connect over coffee, while others seek community through exercise, worship nights, knitting, and even a mental health support group.

This year, we had 182 ministry participants and 331 home group attendees, for a total of 513 people active in various communities at Vernon Alliance.

HOME GROUPS

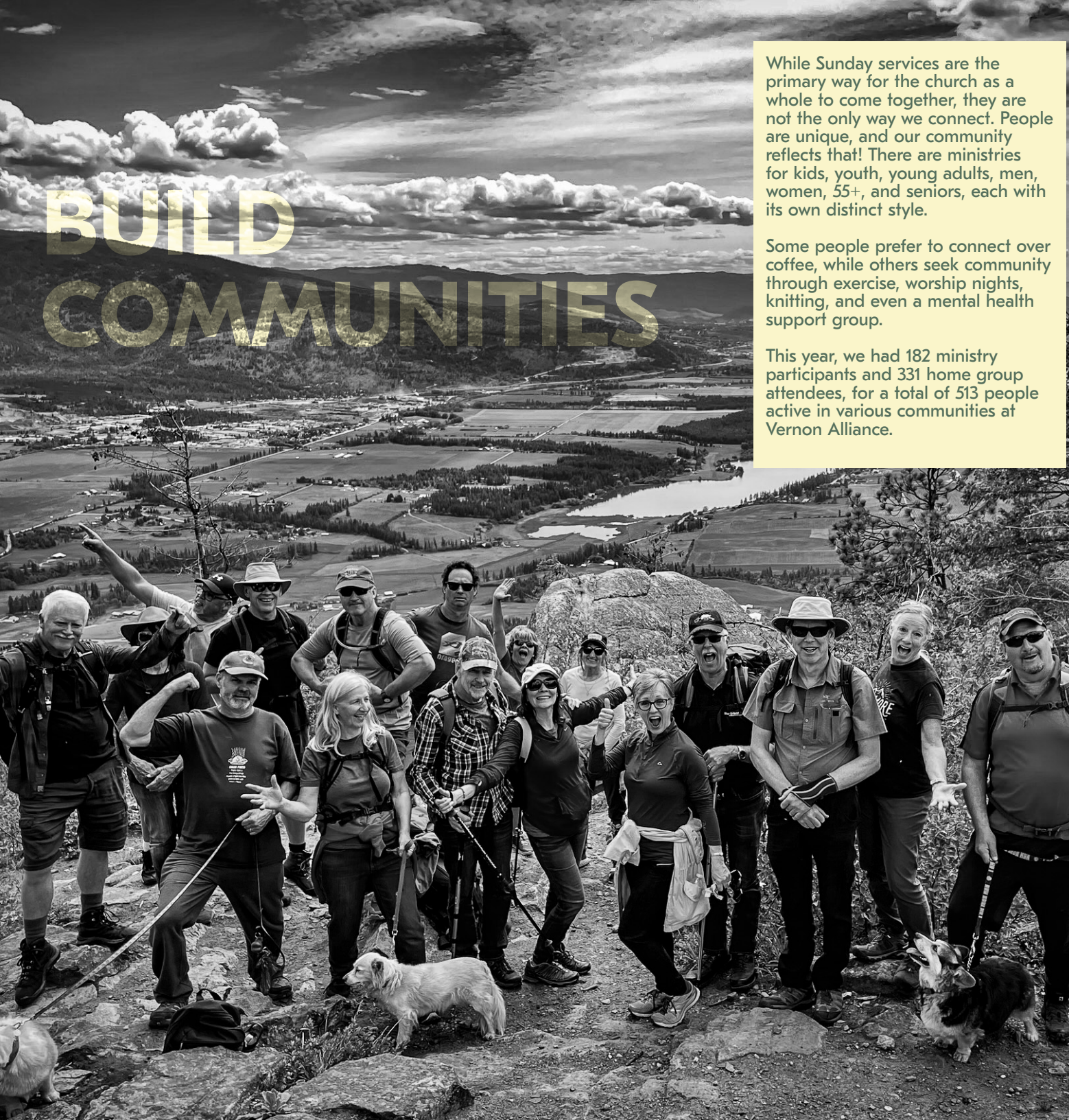
Home groups advance spiritual growth and equip participants with Christian relationships. Groups spend time bonding over a meal, activity, or Bible study when they get together once a week or twice a month in the house of one of the leaders. Compared to the previous year, there were 60 new participants and 9 more groups! That's a 35% increase in groups and twice as many new participants as the '22-'23 ministry year.

31
Home Groups

331
Participants

56
Leaders

9
New Groups



THE *Ministries*

WOMEN

At Vernon Alliance, the women are always looking for ways to strengthen their bonds with one another and spread the love of Christ. This year, 39 women joined the new Tea Trios small groups, which now consist of 15 trios! Every week, five to twenty women join the walking and running groups to engage in community and exercise. Over forty women attended four of the five Gathering events, which included a potluck, worship nights, and a beach day. 52 ladies attended the two video studies that were offered.

MEN

Around 10 men met every Friday morning for coffee and connection throughout the year. This spring, they studied "Jesus's Farewell Message," a video series hosted by Francis Chan.

55+

30-40 people showed up for each of the eight events, about the same as the previous year. There are now 9 members of the leadership team and 58 members of the email contact list for this ministry. This year's activities included bowling, biking, paddle boarding, games nights, potlucks, and walks with carol singing!

SENIORS

Every week in the Arbour, hosts Grant and Dawn Smith lead a bible study for 20-25 seniors. The group has been striving to develop a loving community, and there are people from different walks of life finding connection and a sense of belonging. The seniors held a Christmas "Lupper" and Carol Sing, with over 40 participants!



YOUNG ADULTS

Over the past year, we have made a lot of changes to our Young Adults ministry in an effort to rethink and mold the structure, goals, and essence of the ministry.

We successfully test-launched a biweekly gathering for the 2024-25 year at a nearby coffee shop in Vernon's downtown this past spring. The main goals of these gatherings will be to promote local outreach, discipleship, and community. The young adults will subsequently be expected to organize and lead their own interest-based groups, known as branches, which will convene on different days.

Outside of the bigger biweekly group, these branches will support the development of stronger ties to the community and deeper friendships.

CARE TEAM

We have 13 members of our care team, the same as last year, but there are a few new faces. 41 care calls or visits were given to those in need of assistance by them. There were 38 the previous year. Nine people who had lost a loved one received "Journeying through Grief" mailouts.



EQUIP FOR LIFE

STUDENTS

The number of people attending our student ministries, Reign (grades 8-12) and Spur (grades 6-7), has been steadily rising over the last year. Reign's weekly average student attendance has increased from 51 to 68 this year. In a comparable direction, Spur's weekly average has also increased, rising from 36 to 42.



Our student ministry aims to provide them with a solid foundation in faith for the modern world. Our high school ministry was receptive to exploring deeper subjects such as Christian sexuality, repentance, and missions, in addition to studying the Bible!

Students supplied resources, packed bags, and delivered a full truckload to local outreach. It's wonderful to see the younger generation involved in our city and working as one team. Some students went on a mission trip to Vancouver during spring break to assist Iranian and Afghani refugees.

KIDS

Kids ministry at Vernon Alliance is an exciting place for children to discover God and develop their faith. Pastor Amy Fitchett creates specific and invigorating lessons to help our children grow every week. We saw an average of 87 kids and 15 volunteers a week compared to last year's 70 kid and 14 volunteer average.



Kids Ministry has been increasing the temperature of prayer in our elementary Sunday programs. The kids have worked hard to memorize the Lord's Prayer, and they took time once a month to spend working through prayer stations to learn about how to hear God's voice and make prayer a part of everyday life. 40 kids memorized the Lord's Prayer!

The kids learned so much this year. Some topics included the early church, Joshua, spiritual habits, Easter, and Exodus.





ALPHA

This year's Alpha participation count was slightly under thirty, which is around half that of last year. But more than twenty volunteers stepped up to host tables and facilitate conversations. There were two testimonies shared, and one individual recommitted to Jesus.

RENEWAL WORKSHOPS

Nathan and Katie Jolly were the workshop leaders for three sessions focused on reviving spirituality. An average of twelve people attended each one. The goals of the three studies—Renew our Study, Refresh our Prayer, and Reveal God's Love—were to improve prayer, devotionals, and skills to share the gospel with others.

GROWING IN CHRIST

This course is intended for believers who wish to deepen their relationship with Jesus and study the core ideas of their faith as a follow-up to the Alpha Course. Over the course of ten weeks, the 14 participants formed close connections while discussing important spiritual themes in a casual setting. They were also encouraged to continue their growth, learning, and sense of community by connecting in a home group.

MOBILIZE FOR THE MISSION

SPIRITUAL SEEDS INITIATIVE

We think that God is asking us to be people who live out the gospel in the Okanagan. We are aware that this requires us to be an active church. We challenged our congregation to push themselves over the course of four weeks by personally sharing their faith with others who aren't yet familiar with Jesus in a prayerful manner. This resulted in 82 recorded faith conversations!



On Mother's Day Weekend, about 250 mothers received tomato, zinnia, and marigold seedlings as part of the Planting Spiritual Seeds initiative.

LOCAL *Outreach*

COMMON THREADS

Common Threads serves our community in a tangible way every Monday and Thursday. This service provides a hot, sit-down meal served with a smile. Free clothing is also supplied to anyone in need.

120

Weekly Guests

4875

Volunteer Hours

22,418

Items of Clothing

323

Crock Pots Served

“

This is such an amazing program; I honestly cried the first time I came in and was greeted by the volunteers. This is such a big help for our family; I don't know how to express our gratitude.

- Family Pantry Guest

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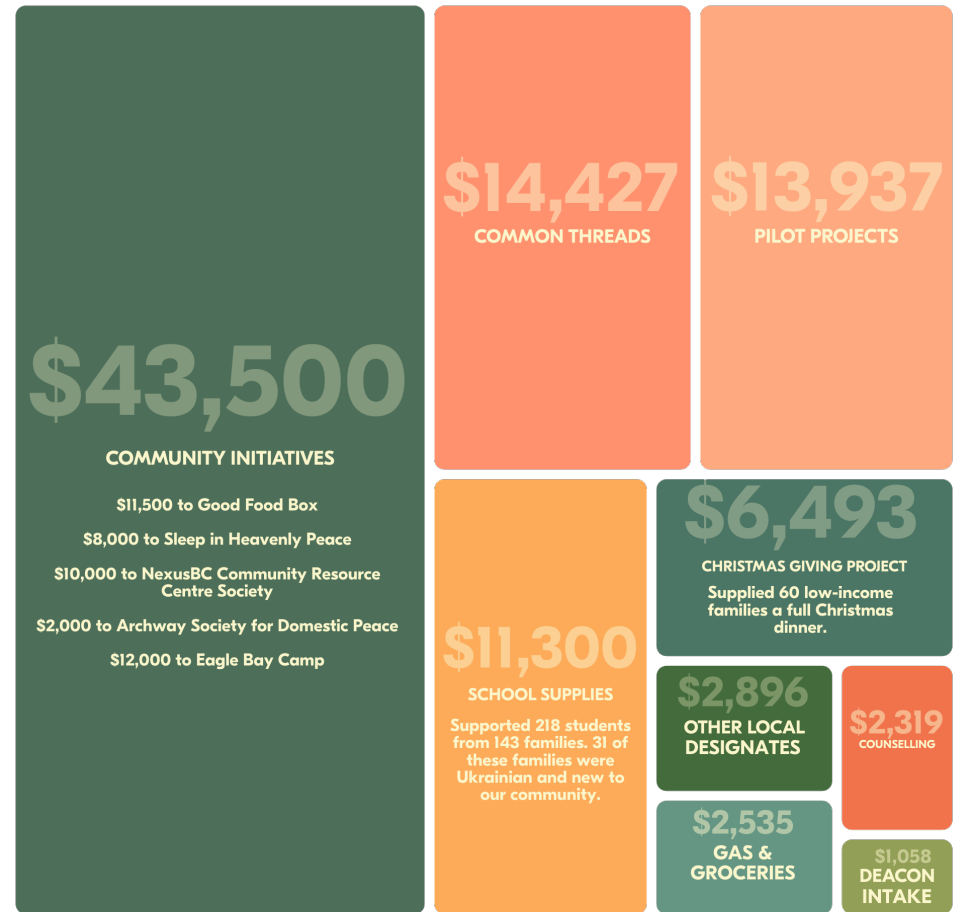
THE FAMILY PANTRY

The Family Pantry is open every Friday from 3-5 and presently supports 37 families, each of varying sizes, for a total of 138 people, including babies.

Families in need of a little extra help can choose from a variety of food and clothing options provided by this Arbour-based charity. The amount of food provided is dependent upon family size. We work in conjunction with community organizations that have identified and referred families in need. This program only accepts referrals from local groups.

From January to June 2024, a mere six months, the family pantry donated groceries valued at \$10,502 in the market. This included about 1,150 articles of clothing and 2,900 grocery items.

FUELING LOCAL OUTREACH



GLOBAL Missions

A team of four travelled to Nepal in January to visit Erin and Travis, to participate in the 20th anniversary celebrations of the Juice Factory, and to visit the team and some village churches that are part of the Beautiful Gate Village Churches Project. They spent 10 days in the country and had the opportunity not only to witness the vital work that Erin and Travis are doing among the Tibetan and Nepalese people but also to visit Beautiful Gate and two of the village churches that we began supporting. The Village Church Project is a three-year commitment totaling \$30,000.00 that aids in the development of churches and their leaders in remote Nepalese communities. Upon their return, the team hosted a "night of stories" sharing pictures and stories of the people they met in Nepal.

This year, the Global team also provided financial assistance to 11 people engaged in short term mission trips.

Raul and Donna Santos, International Strategy Directors for Church Development with Alliance Canada, visited us in April. They spoke with youth, home groups, and the church, highlighting some of the significant work that our international workers are undertaking around the world.

The Missions Team approved two new partnerships this year. New Story Community which provides a safe and nurturing space for a small community of Indigenous women to begin or to continue their healing journey.

Mélodie St. Pierre is partnering with Église Oasis, a francophone church in Montreal, ministering to newcomers in Montreal. Mélodie is a New Venture Apprentice in the St. Lawrence District. Her apprenticeship with the Alliance will



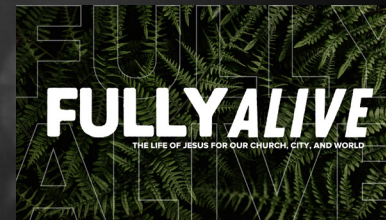
FACILITATE GOD-ENCOUNTERS

WEEKEND NUMBERS

	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Saturday Average:	161	226	206*
Sunday Average:	315	463	549*
Weekend Average:	476	689	736
Easter Sunday:	899	1071	1227
Christmas Eve:	819	1380	1888

*Averages based on 43 Saturdays and 51 Sundays
This excludes Christmas Eve attendance

WHAT WE STUDIED



We recently unveiled Vernon Alliance's new vision to see the church, the Okanagan, and the world fully alive in Jesus. In Fall 2023, we detailed our intention to bring the life of Jesus by building communities, equipping believers, mobilizing the church for the mission, and facilitating God-encounters.

As we pursued this vision, we made some bold changes to how we function as the church. Our conclusion, after evaluating our programs and rhythms, is that we are overly focused on the delivery of weekend services at the expense of initiatives directed at discipleship and mission.

This led to us adding a Sunday service and discontinuing the Saturday service in June 2024. Moving away from Saturday nights gives us the freedom to prioritize new ways of being the church.

“

I thought I had already dealt with this, but Jesus gently brought it back to mind and brought deeper healing.

– Set Free Participant

”

HEARING GOD

This winter Jason hosted the second Hearing God training; to date, just over 100 people from Vernon Alliance have completed the training, including most of the staff from Vernon Alliance. Hearing God explores questions like, Does God still speak today? Why do we need to hear God's voice? Is the Bible the primary way to hear God?

Participants said they were encouraged to learn about the many ways God speaks, to share about how God speaks to them directly, and to hear how God speaks to others in their groups.

SET FREE RETREAT

Set Free was an opportunity to invite God's healing into different areas of life and experience His love, grace, and forgiveness. We successfully hosted this in March with 62 participants and a further 23 people on the leadership and service team!

BAPTISM

Baptism is an essential aspect of what we do at Vernon Alliance. It is a public statement of our deep devotion to Christ. Our 14 baptizees completed our baptism class, shared their testimony, and entered the waters of baptism. For us, this is more than simply a pleasant event; it is an expression of a transformed life through the grace of God.

11
Decisions
for Christ

14
People
baptized

“

I now see the uncomfortable opportunities God presents to me as chances to grow and show more devotion to Him. I'm so excited to show my obedience to God through baptism!

- Jordan Derksen

”



OPERATIONS *Report*

Our Annual General Meeting supplemental package includes a detailed financial overview from the Financial Review Committee as well as an unaudited independent review from KPMG; nevertheless, we'd like to highlight just a few positive developments!

Year	Revenue	Expenses
2023-2024	\$1,730,060	\$1,625,195
2022-2023	\$1,744,445	\$1,573,752

2023-2024 EXPENSE DISTRIBUTION

70%
GENERAL MINISTRY FUND
\$1,276,723

12%
GLOBAL MISSION
\$223,281

11%
BUILDING DEVELOPMENT FUND
\$195,350

7%
LOCAL OUTREACH FUND
\$125,191

FUELING
THE MISSION.

When we look at the revenues and expenses over the past few years, we can celebrate that our donations are higher than our expenses, leaving us in a good financial position as we end the fiscal year. Additionally, 70% of spending is through the General Ministry Fund (which supports ministry, admin, and facility costs); a total of 19% of dollars are spent on local outreach and global missions, with 11% being expensed through the Building Development Fund because we paid off the mortgage on the house.

FACILITY UPGRADES

- Repainted the parking lots
- New Fellowship Hall and Arbour chairs
- Continual upgrading of facility security

OUR *Volunteers*

We are profoundly grateful for the dedication and hard work of our nearly 400 volunteers. Our volunteers support us in every area of our church ministry. Without their unwavering support, our church and its many ministries simply could not thrive. Their commitment is the heartbeat of our community, and we are truly blessed to have each of them.



OUR *Team*

JASON KOLEBA
Lead Pastor

KELLY JOHNSON
Director of Operations

TRUDY KEMPER
Financial Manager

MEL REIMER
Facility Manager

JOCELYNE DINWOODIE
Office Administrator

BOB MACLEOD
Custodian

STEPHEN CHRISTENSEN
Custodian

DAVE MACPHEE
Senior Associate Pastor

AMY FITCHETT
Pastor of Children's Ministry

LEVI MOHR
Pastor of Youth & Young Adults

MATTHEW YOUNG
Families Coordinator

MARNI ROGERS
Ministry Associate

KARIN GALLIE
Common Threads Coordinator

JUANITA GOODFELLOW
Family Pantry Coordinator &
Executive Assistant

JOEL FRIESEN
Worship Pastor

LEIF CARBOL
Graphics & Comm Specialist

TOMMY STOKES
Production Director

SHAUNA BORROWS
Guest Experience Coordinator

ALI KOOGER
Worship Arts Assistant

HUMAN RESOURCES

We said farewell to Ben Robbins, Paul Woods, and Loretta Friedrich this fiscal year, and welcomed Mel Reimer as Facility Manager, Tommy Stokes as Interim Production Director, Ali Kooger as Worship Assistant, and Shauna Borrows as Guest Experience Coordinator.





VERNON

Roastance

2601 43rd Ave | Vernon, BC V1T 3L1