




Spring Garden Church

JUNE 2023

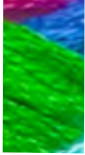


ANNUAL REPORT


OUR VALUES




We believe in a humble God who came not to be served, but to serve. Therefore we engage in sacrificial and active service to those around us. We strive to be good stewards of God's gifts and talents by serving one another in humility. We aspire to regard others as higher than ourselves, which liberates us to creatively take risks in serving others for God's glory.




We believe in a God of grace who came to save the world, not to condemn it. Therefore, as we are continuously receiving the gift of God's grace, we seek to grow in that grace and extend it to others. We strive to define ourselves by what we are for, not what we are against.




We believe in a God who knows us, and who desires to be known. Therefore we embrace a journey of faith that requires us to constantly strive for a personal, intimate and transformative knowledge of God. We strive to be led by God's Spirit in supporting and encouraging one another in working out our faith.




We believe in a creative God. Therefore we are open to expressing our faith in new and creative ways that reflect the beauty and complexity of our creator. We are called to use our creative gifts in worship and service as we engage with our world. We take joy in the diversity of gifts that allow us to delight God and participate in His ongoing story.



We believe in a triune, relational God who calls us to come together as a diverse community of believers. Therefore, we want to walk together, supporting one another physically, emotionally and spiritually. We strive to be a welcoming, inclusive family that goes through the joys and the trials of life together, acknowledging that God uses this community to deepen and mature our faith.



We believe in a God who loves this broken world and wants to reconcile us to Himself. Therefore we are commissioned by Christ to go out into the world, meeting the holistic needs of the local and global community. God calls us to participate in a redemptive work that he has already initiated; in humility, we will partner with others to work alongside and chase after Him.



We believe in a God who is our center. Therefore where we are on the journey is less important than that we are moving towards a deeper relationship with Christ. We believe and participate in God's redemptive work in all people, which gives us the freedom to come as we are, and to accept others as they are. We each are on a unique journey to become who God has created us to be.

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LEADERSHIP

Pastoral Reports



Greg Kay & Sam Lee Co-Lead Pastors

Psalms 86:11

*“Teach me your way, LORD,
that I may rely on your faithfulness;
give me an undivided heart,
that I may fear your name”*

I (Greg) have always loved this prayer in Psalm 86, mostly because it continues to be my heart’s cry; a way of being that I long for, yet never seem to arrive at. Yet it is filled with hope and expectation, because even when we can’t see it, even when we can’t live it, God’s faithfulness is something we can rely on.

While this is a personal prayer, it also seems to resonate well with our journey as a community of faith over the past year. Coming out of lockdowns and through the pandemic, we have had to trust in God’s faithfulness; we have had to seek new ways of being together; we have had to wrestle with the world wide realities of illness and death, isolation and loneliness, war, discrimination, climate change, food insecurity, while holding onto our faith that God continues to be a good God who is working in the world.

We have also experienced the joy of gathering again to worship God together, particularly the uplifting celebration on Easter Sunday; of celebrating the goodness and grace of God alongside of continuing to live out our faith and reaffirming our values as a community. We have welcomed many new friends not only to our country, but into our church family as siblings who enrich our lives together as we continue to grow as a diverse community.

We have experienced the fellowship of re-connecting and making new and deeper connections with others. And we have continued growing deeper in our faith and knowledge of who God is and who God created us to be as beloved children and a family of faith.

We have also had some wonderful opportunities to show God’s care and share God’s story with our neighbours. This year we had our annual Light



of the World Christmas celebration at Mel Lastman square, creating a fun welcoming atmosphere for friends and neighbours, as well as for those who were skating at the rink. We also had many neighbours who came to enjoy both Trick-or-treating at Halloween and an Easter Egg Hunt on Easter Sunday.

Through your generous donations to our Caring and Sharing offering, we have been able to offer desperately needed support to dozens of people in difficult circumstances.

Additionally, with Abby Davidson (our Pastor of Missional Discipleship) and her family welcoming their new baby and taking maternity leave, we have been blessed as a community to have Emily Kielstra join our pastoral team. Emily has not only been a fabulous addition to the team, but she has done a wonderful job of continuing and expanding the ways we as a community show God’s care to our neighbours and growing deeper in our discipleship, as you can read in her report.

In the midst of it all, we have seen and heard that God is good, worthy of all of our praise and awe. God has been so faithful to us as a community as we have sought to worship and live out the Kingdom in our midst. We are so thankful to God for this past year, and look forward to seeing what God does in our midst in the year to come as we seek to offer Jesus our undivided hearts and our unity in the Spirit.

As you read through the reports below, may you be encouraged by God’s hand over our life together this past year, and hearts lifted with hopefulness towards the year before us.

Emily Kielstra

Interim Pastor of Missional Discipleship



“When will things return to normal?” This was a recurring question on everyone’s lips when it became apparent that the COVID-19’s hold on the world was going to persist for longer than the initially expected three weeks. I remember often asking myself and others this question, wondering longingly and at times, despairingly, how long we would have to endure the realities of lockdown and restrictions before we could go back to how things were pre-pandemic; that was until the “when” turned into an “if” and caused a different question to supersede it, namely “What does the new normal look like?”

This past year has in many ways answered this question given that it marks a major shift from a pandemic to a post-pandemic world. Navigating this transitional space and adapting to the changes which the pandemic brought about has not been easy. I know for myself, I have struggled to grant myself permission to dream again, to envision a future that is not overshadowed by social distancing, zoom fatigue, and limited face-to-face interaction. Uncertainties about the future loomed large and my capacity to consistently embody joyful and hopeful expectation was slowly eroded by my fear of facing yet another disappointment. However, in the midst of all this internal wrestling, God has been exceedingly gracious and gentle to me, strengthening my resolve and empowering me to re-imagine possibilities of what building his kingdom here on earth looks like in a post-pandemic world. As I look at Spring Garden Church, specifically at the community’s orientation towards authenticity, depth, and gospel-centered values, I see this same divine grace and strength actively working in the hearts and lives of those at Spring Garden. While I cannot speak extensively to the details of this past ministry year, I would like to make note of a couple of things which God has been doing in and through Spring Garden, particularly as it pertains to adult discipleship and missions.



A significant development has involved establishing a firmer relationship with NeighbourLink North York. Partnering with them has created many opportunities for us to intentionally and missionally engage with those living in our neighbourhood. We hosted events such as the Willowdale Community Yard Sale and Ukrainian Newcomers Teas; we had volunteers participate in Senior’s events at Willowdale Manor; and we

donated produce which was harvested from our garden to NeighbourLink’s Food Hub. Recently, we also started having conversations with the Willowdale Central Ratepayers Association (WCRA) about ways that we can partner with them in cultivating a greater sense of community, connection, and support between neighbours in the Willowdale area.

Moving beyond the purview of our neighbourhood, we have patiently anticipated the arrival of the Raso family from Lebanon. Given that they are expected to arrive this summer, the Refugee Action Group (RAG) are working tirelessly to raise and collect funds and resources which will ensure that the Rasos receive sufficient support during their first year in Canada.

Abby and Jeremy piloted Small Group Sunday, an event which involved sharing a meal together followed by an intergenerational activity and a discussion around a particular topic. Related to this is our Life Group ministry. Over the course of the last year, there have been four/ five groups meeting at any given time, thereby allowing



for relationships to be forged and deepened in meaningful and intentional ways. Additionally, other small groups such as the Lunch, Share & Pray group, the ESL Bible study, and the Thursday Mom’s Meet-Up have borne much fruit as they have consistently met during the last twelve months. All of these events and groups have afforded many people the opportunity to get a taste of community at Spring Garden.

As we look ahead to this next ministry year, prayerfully dreaming about what God desires to do in our church and neighbourhood, I have found myself pondering the significance of two words which not only encapsulate my role here at Spring Garden, but also encapsulate our calling as the Church, namely missional discipleship. I am often tempted to dichotomise the notions of discipleship and mission, preferring to treat them as separate entities; we participate in discipleship and we engage in missional activities and we should be sure not to confuse them. However, what if we saw these two things existing symbiotically? That is, what if we saw mission as an opportunity for discipleship and understood discipleship as a necessary component of Christo-centric mission? My prayer for us is that we would be a diverse community which embraces missional discipleship and which embodies the very presence of Christ in how we show God’s care and share God’s story.

Jeremy Ranasinghe

Pastor of Student Discipleship



“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord”

- Romans 8:38-39 (NIV)

As I reflect on the experiences of this past year, I’m reminded of the unwavering love God has for us, which also brings us together despite what desires division and sources conflict. For me, there’s been a sense of relief and joy as we navigated what’s felt like a COVID-free year. While remaining mindful of the ongoing situation, we can gather without restrictions, allowing us to offer creative worship for kids and youth in a safe, welcoming space that fosters healthy spiritual growth. Within our community, there is also a strong desire and value to nurture our students’ spiritual growth, recognizing children and youth as part of the makeup of our church and not who we need “childcare” or “programming” for. For Spring Garden Church, our kids and youth are living parts of our church, and that’s important. As we’ve returned to what feels like a healthier normal, the focus continues to be on partnering with the families of children and youth to aid in their discipleship and lifelong journey with God.

SGC Summer 2022 Highlight:

Looking back on the summer of last year, our Summer Camp and LIT (Leaders In Training) ministries are a wonderful reminder of the joy and adventure experienced. We were incredibly grateful and excited to operate with better flexibility and fewer restrictions, unlike the previous COVID years, which affected our camps. I am thankful for that year’s team and their fantastic job facilitating three great camp weeks. Our camp ministry allowed us to meet new families from the surrounding community and care for them by offering accessible and affordable camps with quality faith-based content. Engaging our campers in various activities allowed meaningful friendships to form, which we continue to see beyond that summer of 2022, both with a few of our kids and the youth who were part of our LIT and summer staff teams.

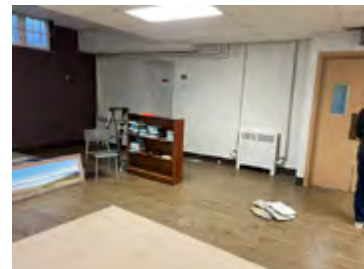


Kids Ministry Renovation Project



In September, a proposal for a renovation project in the Kid’s worship areas was submitted to our Deacons, and it was and continues to be a significant initiative that’s unfolding throughout the year. Recognizing the direct impact our worship environments have on our

kids and, subsequently, their worship, a team was formed and tasked with this project to make creative and unique spaces better suited for our kids to worship in. We wanted these spaces to give a sense of energy and better foster deeper conversations about who God is, what Jesus did, and who/what/where the Holy Spirit is leading us?



A simple task, no??

Jokes aside, I am very grateful and want to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who has been involved in transforming and revitalizing our children’s worship spaces. A special thanks to Darlene, Suzanne B, Lyndzie, Clem, Peggy, Neil, Mark, Krysten, Deb, and our dedicated property team; their unwavering commitment and tireless efforts have already brought great changes that have aided our Kid’s Sunday worship. Also, we are very grateful for this year’s deacons’ team, whose discernment and support enabled us to secure the essential funding for this project while addressing and navigating other important needs within our church community.



So, if you appreciate the changes that have been happening, join me in thanking the individuals and those from the teams mentioned above.

SGC Kids 2022/2023:



Our regular ministry structure for Sunday kids worship resumed in September 2022, offering engaging teachings in a form that mirrors the worship gatherings for our church's youth and adult members. We as a church value and recognize that all people are uniquely created in God's image, and our Kid's worship beautifully reflects this diversity of God's people as we gather on Sunday mornings. Over the year, our community has grown, as we've gotten to meet and welcome new members as part of our church. Together, we've gotten to experience God's love communally in fostering healthy friendships and relationships.

Our teaching has been from the Grow curriculum, which uses silly and engaging monthly themes to teach and convey important faith-based truths. While the themes are fun, there's a larger value as they align their lessons and themes with the liturgical calendar, a traditional observing of the year which organizes and commemorates key events in the life of Jesus and the history of our faith. The liturgical calendar guides many Christians' worship and spiritual practices and has a larger ecumenical value. However, the curriculum aside, the true beauty of our ministry to me, is that the lessons are only tools, and it's really our leaders who teach and share in a way conducive to their personalities and relationships with children.



As we've aimed to build relationships between our leaders and kids, we hope to model and connect kids to our community because of the joy that comes from being part of God's family. We believe that discipleship is a lifelong journey, and it is our privilege to walk alongside our children as they grow and navigate their faith. During this journey, our ministry leaders



and volunteers play a crucial role in modelling a faithful yet imperfect life and providing a place of familiarity and support as children need it growing up. Our ministry for kids relies on the active participation, desire, and dedication of our ministry teams and volunteers, who invest their time and initiate the intergenerational relationships that the Church needs and

desires. A special thanks to those in our ministry teams who make our ministry possible:

- Nursery:** Brenda, Jin, & Olive | Danny, & Manuela | Emily, Maria, & Katie
- Pre K - SK:** Herbert & Elizabeth | Barrie & Lizzie | Chris, Chloe, Ava & Claire
- Big Story Tellers (Gr 1-5):** Ben | Victoria | Abby | Sam
- Gr 1-3 Small Groups:** Scott & Kate | Suzanna & Esther | Alice & Martin
- Gr 4 & 5 Small Groups:** Phil & Tara | Jen, Lyndzie & Neve | Megan
- Hall Monitors:** Judy | Mark | Karen

In addition to building relationships within our community, we organized 2 of our "A Night Out" childcare events in November 2022 and March 2023. These events have been another source of fostering meaningful connections among our children. Not only did these times allow us to engage with them on a deeper level, but they have also provided valuable opportunities for our children to build lasting relationships with one another in the fun and

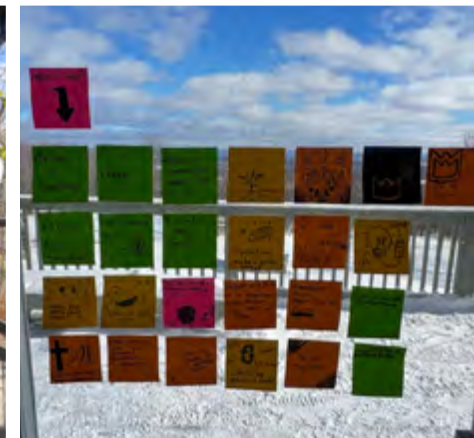
exciting memories that are made, as well as builds into our youth who volunteer to help with the programming and running of activities. Through events and moments like these, we are using these opportunities to nurture a sense of belonging and community among our children, creating a safe and welcoming space for them to grow in their faith together.



Youth Ministry:

This year has been an interesting journey, marked by meaningful experiences and strong community connections. One notable initiative was creating a small food prep team, allowing us to cook homemade meals before our Friday youth gatherings for all the youth joining that night. This team consisted of myself, another leader, and a group of youth who met online during the week to discuss food needs and plans for the coming Friday. This enhanced the relational aspect of our gatherings, fostering deeper connections and conversations and building life skills in learning how to cook.

Our community has grown closer together, with some Sr youth taking on various leadership roles, including leading worship. These opportunities have not only utilized and given them a space to use their unique and gifted/honed talents but have also strengthened the bond among our youth in the time we spent together practicing.





We organized several impactful events throughout the year, including a Raptors Game, our youth Christmas party fall retreat, and separate Jr and Sr winter retreats held in different locations, offering fresh experiences for both groups of youth. A focus that we prioritized was making the retreats accessible for families of youth. In place of the regular Avalanche and Blizzard retreats, we partnered with another church from our denomination and also received a generous grant from TBM (Toronto Baptist Ministries), which helped us keep the costs lower.

In line with our focus on fostering a healthy community, we have been creative in organizing various regular gatherings to accommodate the increasing costs of off-property activities. Our gathering structure consisted of monthly movie nights, game nights with various activities, craft nights that celebrate our unique God-given talents, and separate life groups for Jr and Sr youth. Our time together, while involving a theme or a focus, is really only a tool for the relational ministry needed for youth. Furthermore, our youth have been increasingly involved in different components of worship, with plans to form a youth worship team that will lead music on rotation in both youth and adult worship gatherings starting in the fall of 2023.

The growth of our youth ministry is a testament to the dedication and support of our leaders, including Marcy, Kaitlyn, Megan, Chris, and the youth who sometimes assisted in similar capacities. Their investment in our youth's lives has been essential in creating a nurturing and thriving ministry.



As we look ahead, there seems to be more opportunity for us to engage in missional activities as we seek to learn and contribute to God's restoration. Together, we will continue to nurture discipleship and walk alongside youth in their faith journeys.

Young Adult Ministry:

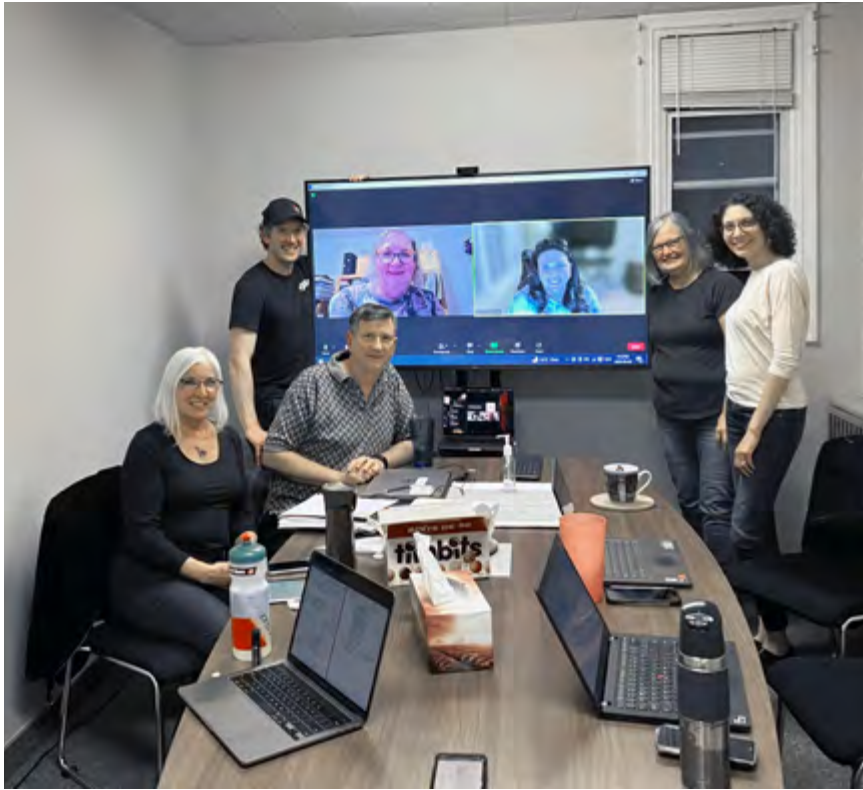
Our Young Adult Ministry has been another focus this year, providing a space for new adults to gather, grow, and deepen their connections with Jesus and one another. In September, we initiated regular monthly meetings, recognizing our young adult members' unique needs and journeys. These gatherings offered and allowed us to engage in intentional conversations about Jesus, faith, and life.

As the year progressed, it became evident that more time and frequency in meetings were needed to foster deeper connections and provide ongoing support. In January, we increased the frequency of our meetings to bi-weekly, creating an even stronger sense of community and growth among our young adults. The response to these gatherings has been positive, yet, a problem we encounter is the lack of time and the culture of busyness which exists for most students and young adults. With individuals sharing their experiences, challenges, and victories as they navigate life's ups and downs, those relational moments have been significant to our building community but are few in experience.

I am grateful to be joined by Emily Keilstra, who recently partnered with me in leading this ministry. With her involvement and leadership, we provide more guidance and support to young adults seeking spiritual connections, offering an environment where they can explore their faith and find support from like-minded peers.

Looking ahead, we have hope for continued growth and engagement within our young adult ministry. We aim to create more opportunities for meaningful discussions, service projects, and social gatherings that foster connections and provide a space for young adults to explore their faith in a supportive community.

We hope our young adult ministry can grow beyond its current capacity and operation, and we are committed to nurturing the spiritual growth and well-being of the adults navigating this unique stage of life. We value their voices, perspectives, and contributions to our church community, and we are excited to journey alongside them as they seek to live out their faith in meaningful and impactful ways.



The Deacon's Board

Report from Krysten Cameron

The Board of Deacons is elected by Members of the Spring Garden congregation to oversee “the administrative and temporal affairs of the Church”. We meet on the second Tuesday of each month to discuss various matters of church business related to the annual operating budget, the church property, staffing and personnel issues, church ministries and missions, and membership. This year, the Board of Deacons was made up of: Krysten Cameron (Chair), Cheryl Chapman (Worship), Darlene Boyd (Missions), Esther Penner (Adult Ministries and Membership), Scott Moore (Vice-Chair, Secretary and Property), Debbie Templemeyer (Child and Youth Discipleship), Jeff McGee (Finance), Ben Reynolds (Property).

We have worked hard this year with the whole Leadership Team to discern, focus on, and follow the plans God has for Spring Garden. This year, in addition to matters pertaining to the everyday operations of the church, the Deacons spent much of our time focused on reviewing policies and procedures pertaining to operations and working through various property refresh items. We are excited about the growth in membership we have experienced and about the opportunity of the upcoming church retreat.

The house at 106 Spring Garden has been rented out again to new tenants and we feel confident that the house is a safe and welcoming place for them and that we can continue to have good tenants as our neighbours and part of the community. The renewal and rejuvenation of the property committee has continued to be a topic at many of our meetings and we hope you have noticed some of the work that has been going on to keep the church up and running. We are working on discerning a significant property re-refresh and you may have been downstairs to see the work that has happened for our children and youth ministry areas. We continue to look for ways to make our spaces welcoming and accessible for all.

Not nearly as exciting, but just as important - as a Board, we have also continued to look at matters related to budget (including consideration of special projects or expenses outside of our approved annual budget), existing and proposed ministries, our role in local and global mission initiatives, maintenance of and upgrades to our property, policy and procedure reviews, and staffing and personnel matters. We continue to monitor our finances and also trust that God will provide. The past few years have left many of us facing challenges, and the Deacons are no exception. We continue to be grateful for the hope and joy that has also been present and the ways our church has supported its community. We are also excited about the support that we have been building to bring a refugee family to Canada in the coming months.

As the chair, I have sensed and experienced God using the gifts he has given each Deacon, to serve in meaningful ways and to support one another in His work. What a blessing and joy it is to be able to serve the church in this way! I would like to take this opportunity to formally and publicly thank the whole team for your time, your faithful service, your attention to supporting one another, your willingness to share your gifts and acts of service, and your prayerful presence on the Board. I have continued to grow in my own leadership and have learned many new and interesting things. It has been a pleasure to serve alongside this team.

I know the team joins me in welcoming our new Deacon for the upcoming year. We ask our fellow Spring Gardeners to continue to pray for our church and for the Deacons as we work together in managing church resources. May we be able to discern together and follow what God has planned for us, and may we know joy in serving this way.



Elders

Report from Anne Barron

As I reflect on this past year both for Spring Garden as a whole and for our Elders Team, it is evident that God has been faithful and good.

We began the year welcoming Shannon Loewen to our team, only to see her follow God's leading to move West in the fall. We prayed and asked Suzanna Lai to become an Elder, using her gifts of prayer and compassion to serve on the team.

Prayer is the foundation of what we do as Elders. As Myrna wrote in her Delve article in March, "It is a joy to be able to pray for the staff, the members of the Spring community and the broader outreach into this church's role in local and world-wide ministry." We have supported Greg, Sam, Abby (and now Emily), Jeremy and Dale in prayer as a whole team and as each Elder has connected with a specific staff member on a more relational basis.

We have seen healing and great answers to prayer as we have supported those in our community who have battled cancer, mental health issues, and other challenges of life. We have prayed for events happening at the church and in the community, for our youth, for our many new immigrants as they begin their life here in Canada - the list goes on.

The Elders would love to pray for you and with you. We continue to encourage you to submit prayer requests through a confidential mailbox on our website. These requests are passed on to the Elders and are kept confidential. They

are not put on the prayer line unless you request it. Please feel free to reach out to one of us through our contact information in Delve, through the confidential mailbox or in person at church. No matter how small the request is we would love to pray for you.

We have also seen God work as we have come together with the Pastors and Deacons for extended times of prayer and discernment. God has provided unity and vision as we come together and move forward as a church.

It is with gratitude that I thank Myrna, Margaret, and Gonzalo for their faithful service as Elders over the last three years. I personally appreciate their dedication to continued prayer for Spring Garden and their care for the pastors and others they have supported. I am confident that even though their official term as Elders is finished, they will continue to pray faithfully for Spring Garden.

As we continue to move forward, cultivating a culture of goodness and growing our diverse family I look forward to working with Suzanna and our new team of Elders supporting you in prayer however we can.



LOVING GOD & LOVING OTHERS



Communal Life

Submitted by Sam Lee

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. - Acts 2:42-47

We gather together as the people of God because in Christ we have been called to the communal, relational God in Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. As I reflect back on this past year of our community life, I am encouraged by the number of opportunities where people were able to connect and grow in their relationship with one another. Whether it



was enjoying God's creation at our annual camping trip, to that of our neighbourhood potluck, these were moments of enacting the fellowship we have with one another as we worship God together at Spring.

One area of community life that I want to highlight is our weekly coffee time.



This time would not have been possible without the service of our volunteers who gave of their time, money, and hospitality so that we could "break bread" together. I am thankful for our team of Victoria, Cliff, Tara, Phil, Karen, Suzanna and her team, and Esther and her team. Thank you so much for your

service this year as you played a significant role in helping our community fellowship with one another and to be hospital to those who were visiting.



Communal Worship

Submitted by Greg Kay

One of the wonderful blessings of this past year for many of us is that we have been able to be together again for worship. Easter worship particularly had a sense of joyful celebration. The sense of joyful celebration at Easter worship particularly was amplified by the joy of being together. Alongside this of course, we have also been able to continue streaming worship online so that those of us who are immunocompromised, suffering from illness or injury, or simply too far away, are able to participate with us in worship.

I always find myself with a deep sense of gratitude whenever I think about how many people of our community come together to cultivate a meaningful worship time. On the platform there are so many-musicians, our worship leaders Colin Chapman and Anne Barron, those who lead prayers, who read scripture, who bless the children, who share their stories-who help us as a people to lift our voices to God in worship. And of course there are those who humbly serve behind the scenes to create the environment for us to be able to focus on God: sound techs and projectionists, particularly Brandon Quek and Dale Forder who have trained volunteers and run sound and projection since the pandemic; Cheryl Chapman who makes our communion bread, and the team of people who clean the communion cups; and the Creative Team.

I especially want to acknowledge Jane McClean who for many years has organized getting Scripture readers for our worship gatherings. As Jane is 'retiring' from this role, I want to express my gratitude on behalf of the whole congregation for her faithfulness, dependability and integrity in taking leadership for a very important part of our worship together.

Regarding Bibles, another behind the scenes but important initiative this year was replacing our pew bibles with a new translation. To do this we had a team of people who came together to research and to prayerfully discern what translation is best for

Spring Garden at this time, prioritizing our values of accessibility of language, inclusive language, consistency with the original languages, and diversity in the team of translators. The group made up of Sam Lee, Ben Reynolds, Esther Penner, Anne and Garth Barron, Scott Moore, and myself, felt unified in our discernment time that NIV was what God was leading us to. It is our prayer that having these bibles in the pews assist in helping people to worship and hear from God in our communal worship together.



One additional behind the scenes project this year was adding the screens along the East side of the worship area so that those who sit there are able to see what is being projected. Our thanks go to Colin Chapman and those who worked with him to set those up!

Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving, and extol him with music and song. -Psalm 95:1-2

Lunch, Prayer & Share

Submitted by Faith Holwyn



This year began with a time of prayer and soul searching as we asked what God had in mind for daytime women's ministry at Spring. Many will remember Refresh - meeting Wednesday mornings over the decades - first known as Wednesday

Women, then as Refresh. Through Covid we met on Zoom and found our numbers were getting smaller as members had other commitments. For many years Margaret led a senior's study on Thursdays and Victoria led that group in Bible Study when Margaret retired.

So the two groups merged - the seniors' noon hour Thursday study and Refresh. We renamed ourselves as LUNCH, PRAYER AND SHARE. We started small with only one or two, but as the leader I felt strongly that God was saying that numbers didn't matter.

Now we meet every second Thursday from 1200-1400. Often there are 6 or 7 of us who meet in the East Lounge that opens off the Worship Area. As one of our members noted - "It's a more intimate space" than the other lounge, as we share our life journeys with each other and pray.

We encourage new women to join us - it's a great place to practice English as a second language - and as we open our lunches and nibble and share and look at what God is saying to us from the Bible, we get to know each other and God better. Our prayer times for each member who comes are reminders to all of us that we have a Loving Father who delights when we stop our busy lives and take time to meet with Him and with each other.

I want to acknowledge the past leadership of Victoria Shipmaker, Jennifer Chrystman and Beverly Holtzman - and I am so thankful for how much they have contributed to women's ministry at Spring.

SHOWING GOD'S CARE & SHARING GOD'S STORY

Garden Team

Submitted by Brenda Forder



The Community Garden Team is very grateful for an abundant harvest of food to share with people in our community, opportunities to build relationships, and meet and work alongside neighbours in the community.

15 weekly deliveries of vegetables and herbs were made to NeighbourLink here in North York. NeighbourLink seeks to alleviate social isolation through community events and also provides community care through home visits and referrals to support, including the distribution of fresh produce in a variety of ways. The harvests from SGC's Community Garden were shared with Willowdale Manor, a Toronto Community Housing seniors residence.

Weekly deliveries included a selection of fresh and nutritious kale, radishes, green beans, tomatoes, chives, dill, parsley, mint, cilantro, purslane, carrots, and beets. A small group of enthusiastic and grateful seniors met the weekly delivery at their end and distributed it to the tenants. Throughout



the summer, the delivery of fresh produce was also supplemented by NeighbourLink providing five intergenerational events which included listening to the senior's stories and having fun together dancing, eating, painting and playing board games. Spring Gardeners were invited to join these events. The seniors at Willowdale Manor send thanks to Spring Garden for their contribution of fresh produce.

Many thanks to the numerous volunteers who contributed to the garden. There was a wide range of people involved and diverse ways that they contributed. Some individuals re-installed the edging after last year's expansion, others bought seeds and plants, adults and kids were planting seeds together, many for the first time. Some thrived engaging with and

recruiting neighbours, others weeding, watering, pruning and staking the crazy tomatoes, harvesting and delivering. We had several neighbours help with various harvest nights, as well as several children helping with planting and harvesting.

Some volunteers were helping every week and others once or twice. Whether small or large, every contribution is valued, and often came just at the right time, when that help was needed. So thank you everyone who contributed!

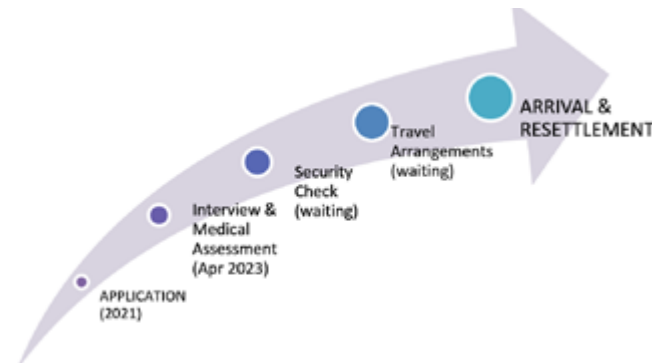
One favourite memory to highlight from this season was a young child who visited on one of our last harvest nights. He came with his dad just to say thank you for the joy the garden gave him this year! Full of questions about the tomatoes, he went home thrilled with fists full of marigolds.



Refugee Action Group(RAG)

Submitted by Phyllis McGee

“Speak up for people who cannot speak for themselves. Protect the rights of all who are helpless. Speak for them and be a righteous judge. Protect the rights of the poor and needy.” -Proverbs 31: 8.9



Anticipation is mounting as the application process for the RASO family has kicked into high gear. Hope is renewed that the RASO family—Soleman, Nesren, Dawod, Abd, and Rama will soon be arriving in Canada. After 18 months of

WAITING, the Raso’s had their interview and medical assessments at the Canadian Embassy in Beirut Lebanon a few weeks ago. When their security checks are complete, travel arrangements will be made by the Canadian government. This is exciting news. We are praying the family will arrive this summer but the approval process can be unpredictable.

While WAITING we have focused on telling the Raso’s story through interviews, Delve articles, and engaging at the IHOP Pancake dinners, Advent, and Light of the World. We have also been much in prayer for the family, that their needs would be met and that the application process would move along.

Once the Raso family arrives in Canada there will be numerous opportunities to send out members of the SGC family to be involved in resettling the family in Canada as they learn English, set up a household, shop for clothes, get enrolled in schools, obtain credentials, and obtain a job. We are so thankful for the household donations and financial donations that have been made this year. One of the main responsibilities of SGC as sponsors is supporting the family financially for 12 months. There is currently \$32,000 in the Refugee fund. As we move forward in anticipation of the family’s arrival, we will need to raise about \$55,000 more to adequately support a family of five. The budget has recently been adjusted given recent inflation.

Could you join with us in prayer for the RASO family, that they would arrive in Canada before school starts in September? Pray with us for opportunities to show love to both the RASO and RISOU family, so that they would have a strong sense of belonging in Canada.

The members and committee members of the Core Group are:

Co-chairperson: Phyllis McGee and Jeff McGee, Secretary: Carrie Wright, Finance: Deb Templemyer, Communication: i. Internal Spring Garden: Jen Chrystman & ii. External: Lois Williams, Carol Cunningham, Family Liaison: Tarik Risou, Fund Raising: all members, Pastoral Liaison: Abby Davidson/Emily Kielstra, Deacon Liaison: Deb Templemyer and Jeff McGee

Vocational Missionaries

Reports from



Maria Speare
(NeighbourLink North York)

As we pause to reflect on the achievements of NeighbourLink North York in 2022, our hearts overflow with gratitude and thanksgiving for the unwavering prayers and support of Spring Garden Church. You have been an invaluable source of strength and encouragement on our journey as vocational missionaries.

It has been a year of tremendous growth and impact, and we are humbled by the dedication and hard work of our team, volunteers, and community partners. Through our Community Building and Community Caring initiatives, we have worked tirelessly to build a more connected community, alleviate poverty and isolation, and provide support to the most vulnerable in our community.



Our Community Building initiatives have been a huge success, bringing together neighbours and fostering a sense of connection and belonging.

Our Meet Your Neighbour Week, Community Yard Sale Day, Christmas Walking Parade and Market, Let's Move Willowdale Community Move-a-thon and BBQ and Seniors and Ukrainian newcomers programs have all been memorable events that have brought joy and a sense of community to our neighbourhood.



Meanwhile, our Community Caring initiatives have continued to provide support for individuals and families in crisis. This includes our food

support programs, wellness checks, summer youth arts drop-in, and many more. Our 415 food hub, with a focus on providing fresh and nutritious food, has been a lifeline for many in our community, especially for those who have experienced trauma and stigma.

We are immensely grateful for your partnership, compassion, and dedication to making a tangible difference in the lives of those we serve.

Colleen Stevens
(NeighbourLink North York)

Thank you, Spring Garden, for standing with me in my role of Outreach Worker with Neighbourlink North York. Throughout the summer and winter, I devoted my time to



home visits, listening to people's stories, building a community care team, and developing partnerships with support agencies, including the school boards and the City of Toronto. NeighbourLink responds to requests for support within North York such as phone buddies, grocery shopping assistance and food bank delivery support to families throughout Willowdale. With COVID we weren't able to provide rides to medical appointments but we also tried to direct calls to other organizations such as iRide Plus. One of the greatest accomplishments of 2021/2022 was the opening of food produce distribution days in the basement of the main building at 415 Willowdale Avenue "Willowtree" and the residents chose to call it the 415 Food Hub. It is a landing place for community building, building relationships, youth training, volunteer involvement for the residents, and through the Hub, NeighbourLink is able to identify some needs and assets in the neighbourhood, in partnership with Toronto Community Housing. The fresh produce from Spring Garden's community garden will encourage the Food Hub this summer tremendously.

Reports from



We, your Spring Garden missionaries serving at Youth Unlimited (YFC Toronto), never cease giving thanks for your partnership in our ministries across the city - through financial support, prayer support, participating in our events, and volunteering in our ministries. It is a joy to share a brief overview of how God was at work through Youth Unlimited over the past year.



Scott Moore, Executive Director

2022 was our first full year returning to “normal” programming since 2019. Demand for YU programs across the city was very high as we quickly returned to pre-pandemic levels of outreach, and even increased the number of youth in

long-term mentoring relationships. To learn more about our overall impact in 2022, head to impact.yugta.ca.

In my role, 2022 was highlighted by our first in-person fundraising dinner in 3 years. It was such a joy to gather more than 300 guests to share God’s transformative work in the lives of young people and their families. I was also grateful to be a part of facilitating the discernment process for our upcoming 4-year strategy, “Gaining Ground.” Our new leadership team also completed its first full year overseeing YU here in Toronto. We were grateful for the patience and grace of our staff team as we navigated through this season of significant change.

Thank you so much for your ongoing support of my role and ministry at Youth Unlimited! In July 2023, I will celebrate 10 years as Executive Director of YU!



Manuela Stephens, Executive Assistant to Scott Moore

Thank you so much for adding me to your distinguished list of vocational missionaries! I am so grateful to Spring Garden for your support in my role at YU.

I have thoroughly enjoyed working alongside Scott coordinating his schedule to help ensure that his time is as effective as possible as he fulfills the responsibilities to which God has called him.

It’s been almost a year and half since I started at YU. My highlights in the past year were helping at two of our big fundraising events and meeting

many of our ministry supporters in person.

I enjoy being able to support the ministry and see the ripple effect of impact - from our leadership team through to our staff, all the way down to young lives being impacted by the Good News of Jesus’ love and life-changing power.

Thank you for your faithful prayers and the warm welcome I have received!



Kathy Webb, Administrative Assistant

Thank you for your continued faithful prayers and support. Looking back at the past year, I’m so grateful for the opportunities I’ve had to serve at YU as part of the Support Services team. Much of my time is spent on processing donations, managing some of our HR

systems and onboarding new staff. After a year of ‘firsts’ with some of my new responsibilities, I’m looking forward to the coming year to build on that foundation! Our Support Services team is gearing up to bring in new systems for accounting and HR - your prayers would be appreciated for these transitions as these new systems are implemented and we all adapt and adjust. Thank you Spring Garden!



Monica Kay, Leadership Development Director

Dear Spring Garden Family,

Thank you for your faithful prayers, encouragement, and support. I have been in my new role as Leadership Development Facilitator at Youth Unlimited, GTA since July 2022. Although I miss directing

LAUNCH (leadership dev. program for youth and young adults), this new role is a great fit for me in this season in my life. I have the joy of helping develop team leaders within the organization, coaching those with specific leadership needs and challenges, and supporting the overall development and care of our YU staff team. More specifically, I am also the team shepherd for the Frontiers Team, offering pastoral care and prayer for eight members of the team. My high-lights are watching the growth of those participating in the Leading Teams Training, and the continued investment in the alumni of this program. On an academic note, I have just begun Year 3 of the Doctorate of Ministry Program





at Tyndale, with a focus in leadership. Nearly everything I am learning I am able to apply directly to my work at Youth Unlimited and to my volunteering with the Arrow Leadership Program. I would greatly appreciate continued prayers for wisdom and for protection as I continue to grow personally, and invest in others for God's Kingdom work in our city and beyond. Thank you for being wonderful partners in this work.

With gratitude,
Monica Kay mokay@yugta.ca



Clement Lee, Jane-Finch Director

Thank you Spring Garden for all your support over the years. This past fall marked 10 years of my being staff at YU - I couldn't have hit this milestone without you!



Looking back at this past year, I must say it's been filled with ups and downs. In the fall, I had the pleasure of being a part of a group of YU leaders discerning where God is leading us in the near future. Out of this has come our Gaining Ground commitments (details can be found here: <https://gainingground.yugta.ca/>). We've also been piloting a new boxing ministry out of the Rexdale neighbourhood and are encouraged by its potential. This year has also given us the opportunity to develop better volunteer and young leadership pathways within our program, with the hope that this will help deepen the impact we can have in the community.

On the challenging end of things, our team has been grieving the loss of some of our young people to violence over the winter. Understandably, it's been tough for some of the team - having lost someone who they've worked with since a young age. Though discouraged, the team continues to press on, knowing that God is with them.

Please continue to pray for the Jane Finch community. Thank you again friends!

Other Vocational Missionaries



Report from Jen Chrystman (OMF)

Transitions have always been a part of missions. When Hudson Taylor started the China Inland Mission in 1865, the CIMers also became understood as "Constantly in Motion" and as the mission became the Overseas Missionary Fellowship after the communist revolution in the mid 1900s, that OMF logo became associated with "Only More Frequently" Both are still true.

Our OMF guest home on Avenue Road has been about my 30th home in 69 years. As I look back over the year, I'm so thankful to you, Spring Garden for your support in finances, prayer and ministry partnership.

As we've made a transition from Covid self-isolating returnees and some monthly renters to mission conferences again, I love the fact that an 11-bedroom guest home has enough space for Spring Garden people who are also in transitions and need a free "home" for months. Here we are!

I love the variety of people that God brings into my life through ministry here: a family from Japan was here for 6 months, another missionary to Japan was here off and on for 8 months, finally getting his kidney transplant, AIM, Wycliffe, Rising Above, MissionPrep and others have stayed for conferences. I also love the variety of tasks throughout the days: welcoming, room prep, grocery shopping, meal and snack prep and clean-up, sharing the lawn/garden care and snow shovelling, problem-solving and the ongoing bookings and spreadsheets. Well. Perhaps I don't love the admin things!

The next exciting transition for me is a return to the Philippines in October to finish my 69th year with a field assignment before I retire. Since the manager of our Manila guest home is returning to Australia for her year of home assignment, I've agreed to manage from November through to the end of February 2024. It's a beautifully renovated, 12-bedroom place with a huge seminar room, dining and living areas, library, etc. I plan to sneak out of the manager's office as often as possible to spend time with the guests and assist the house helpers and chef. Doorbelle will be staying here in Canada, but her son Bingbong is the resident dog there, so I'll still have furry family around.

My plan is to spend the next 10 or 12 winters in the Philippines, helping with Dawn for the Poor ministries where needed, reading my way through several mission home libraries and scuba diving. In the summers, I'll enjoy a 32' trailer at my sister Steph's 20 acres near Welland and commute in to worship with you from time to time. Yes. I'll bring my kayaks with me to enjoy more prayer paddling with you.

STEWARDSHIP & ADMIN

Church Clerk June 2022 - May 2023

BIRTHS

March 1, 2023, Olivia Grace Davidson, to Abby and Bruce Davidson

DEDICATIONS

None.

BAPTISMS

July 24, 2022, Aylin Keykhaee
July 24, 2022, Kkeyvan Mahmoodnezhad
July 24, 2022, Zahra Mostafavi Shahri
Nov 6, 2022, Leila



NEW MEMBERS

Manuela Stephens
Danny Stephens
Alice Bouwma
Martin Bouwma
Veronica Newell
Suzanne Boyd
Leila

MARRIAGES

Aug 20, 2022, Suzanne Solomon and Jeremy Boyd
Oct 9, 2022, SJ Holsteen and Sam Chaise

MEMBERS TRANSFERRED OUT

none

DEATHS

None.

ACTIVE MEMBERS 102

Noted that 11 members were moved to inactive

Respectfully submitted, Karen Cassel, Church Clerk

Property Stewardship Team

(June 2022 to June 2023)



The Property Stewardship Team works to keep the church building, grounds, and our rental house at 106 Spring Garden in a state of good repair.

During 2022-2023 we have expanded the team and organized fall and spring clean-ups. The team has discerned that in the next few years the church building will require some major upgrades regarding roofing and HVAC. We have recently received quotes for replacing our 30-year old roof over the east lounge, as well as quotes for our heating and cooling systems that are soon reaching end-of-life. We are reviewing various options and costs, especially with a view to reducing our carbon footprint. We are also considering how best to beautify the property and entrance on the Kenneth Ave (east) side of the church. The biggest change for the coming year will be that Wes Chapman, who has long been the chair of the property team, will step down from chairing the Property Stewardship Team.

Here is a list of repairs/changes we have completed in the past year:

1. Renovations in the children's area were a joint project with Property and Children's and Youth Ministry
2. Minor repairs and equipment replacement at 106 Spring Garden
3. Tree and hedge trimming at 106 and 112 Spring Garden
4. Upgrades to doors and security
5. Continued salting of the parking lot by the Property Stewardship Team to save on costs
6. Radiator leak repairs
7. Boiler and AC repairs and maintenance
8. Switching over light fixtures to LED lights and replacing ceiling tiles
9. There are many other small tasks that were completed and many still ongoing.



We would like to thank Fazil Mohammed for the weekly maintenance performed by him and his company, Moe's Cleaning.

We would also like to thank Wes Chapman for his many years of service to stewarding and caring for our property. He has done a tremendous job, above and beyond the call of duty!

Respectfully submitted,

Your Property Stewardship Team

FINANCE

Report from Jeff McGee (Finance Deacon)

2022 Financials

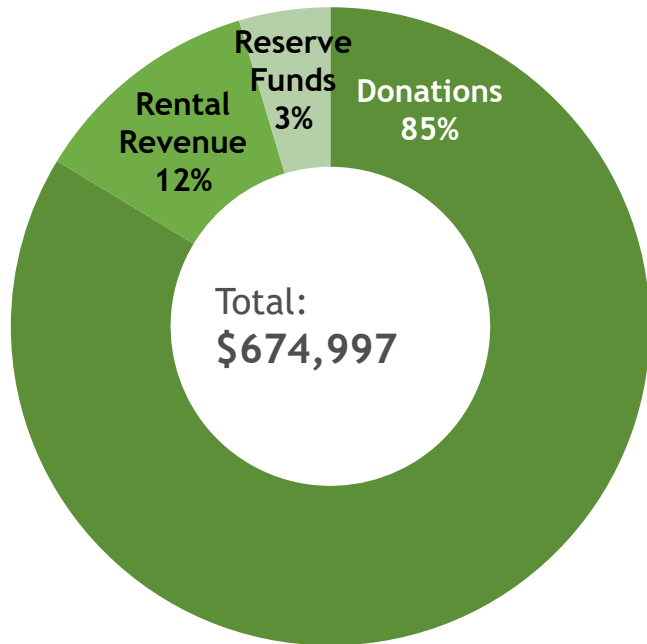
Summary of 2022 Operating Budget

	2022 Budget	2022 Actual
Expenses	\$ 650.0k	\$ 604.2k
Revenue	\$ 650.0k	\$ 604.8k
		\$ 0.6k

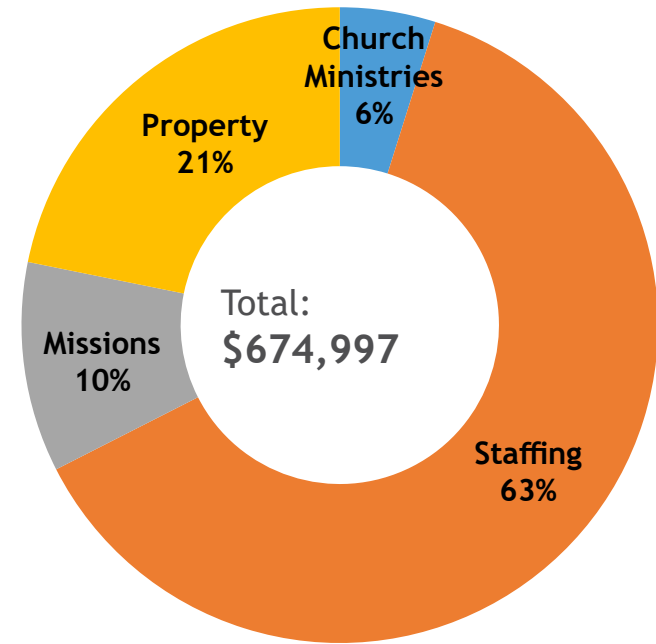
See the 2022 Audited Financial Statements at <https://www.springgardenchurch.ca/s/2022-Audited-Financial-Statements.pdf>

2023 Financials

2023 Approved Operating Budget = \$674,997



Donations	85%	574,597
Rental	12%	80,400
Missions	10%	68,374
	100%	674,997



Ministries	6%	36,295
Staffing	63%	426,603
Missions	10%	68,374
Property	21%	143,725
	100%	649,974

2023 Results as of April 30, 2023

	2023 Budget	2023 Actual
Expenses	\$ 225.8k	\$ 202.2k
Revenue	\$ 225.0k	\$ 166.7k
		\$ -35.5k

- We are controlling expenses and revenue is up from 2022, but we are currently running a \$35k deficit.
- Please give prayerful consideration to your tithe. We encourage those committed to Spring Garden to schedule monthly donations. For more information on how to set this up please contact Koon Leung at koon.leung@sgbc.ca.
- The Reserve Fund + Special funds have combined over \$258k, which can be allocated by Deacons.
- Caring and Sharing fund has a healthy allocation of almost \$9k.
- The Syrian Refugee Sponsorship fund has over \$32k.

IT/AV Committee

Committee Members: Colin Chapman, Wes Chapman, Kevin Lai, Sam Lee
Report by Kevin Lai

The IT/AV Committee coordinates the technology requirements for audio/visual needs at church which often span different church ministries and departments. This was a pandemic recovery year.

The church applied for some government funding to upgrade our security systems.

The video surveillance system was upgraded to better, more flexible and secure cameras and DVR appliance. The entrance key pass system was also upgraded to a newer platform to allow for multiple authorized users



and remote management. The doorbell was also upgraded to a smart video doorbell. Members can listen for the church doorbell in the West Lounge now.

The network firewall was also upgraded to an enterprise grade open source firewall to accommodate the new security devices, and to allow for faster and secure internet connection.

A hybrid virtual and in-person approach was continued for communal worship service this year. As existing and new congregants attended Sunday worship gathering, the east section of the worship area, was upgraded with display monitors to allow better viewing of the projectors screen contents. The AV control area on the rear balcony was continually upgraded to facilitate the audio, video, and streaming capabilities for a post-pandemic era.

Please be aware that if you volunteer to serve in Sunday Worship Gathering on stage, you are giving SGC consent to have your likeness and content to be recorded and distributed online, such as on YouTube. If you do not wish to be recorded, please do not enter the front stage area during Sunday Worship. Please also be aware that certain portions of the church are under video surveillance, such as the entrance lobby interior, as well as the exterior parking lot. If you have concerns about your privacy, please speak with a deacon, as well as a member of the pastoral team/office staff to have your images removed or not recorded.

Thank you for those volunteers who have stepped up to support the AV and IT ministry in the background as we returned to in-person worship.

Resource Centre

Report from Karen Cassel



The purpose of the Resource Centre is to provide books, videos, and study guides for general Christian growth, study, and leisure as well as to speak to the needs and events that are taking place in the wider church life.

We are so fortunate to have a book budget and have the ability to purchase books to meet our objectives, and to support the teachings we enjoy each Sunday.

There is a monthly feature in Delve to introduce new books and/or highlight the books that correspond to the preaching series.

We continue to await the return of many books that were borrowed before March 2020, and many of them have been removed from our database as it seems unlikely that they will be returned.

Some of the new books added this year include *The gift of wonder: creative practices for delighting in God*, by Christine Aroney-Sine, *Women who risk: secret agents for Jesus in the Muslim world*, by Tom and Joann Doyle and *Introducing Christian ethics: core convictions for Christians today*, by David Gushee.

The Resource Centre is online, and you can look up and request books from the church website. Go to:

<http://springgardenchurch.ca/library>

Click on button labeled 'Online Catalogue'

This will take you to a search screen where you can input your search terms (title, author, subject, etc.) to discover what is available in the library.

You can submit a request for a book, and it will be emailed to me.

Nominating Committee

As in past years, the Nominating Committee worked diligently to find and nominate members to fill important roles within the church, including Deacons, Elders, Nominating Committee and Church Officers. The Nominating Committee met to discuss and prayerfully consider those members who seemed a good fit to fill the above positions. We are grateful to all the members of our church community who were approached and took the time to consider serving in this way. The Nominating Committee Report is the result of this process.

For those thinking about being on the Nominating Committee, keep in mind that it is a relatively small commitment that serves an important purpose. It is a 2-year commitment that includes a few meetings at the beginning of each year. In consultation with the pastoral team, the hope is to find members who represent the diverse make-up of Spring Garden Church. If this is something that appeals to you, please consider serving on the Nominating Committee in future years. Email Greg at gregkay@springgardenchurch.ca

Deacons (3 year term)

Current Deacons	Finishing Year
Ben Reynolds	2023
Cheryl Chapman	2023
Debbie Tempelmeyer	2024
Scott Moore	2024
Esther Penner	2024
Jeff McGee	2025
Darlene Boyd	2025
Nominees	
Krysten Cameron (1 Year Extended)	2024
Garry Lam	2026

Elders (3 year term)

Current Elders	Finishing Year
Gonzalo Librado	2023
Margaret Sutton	2023
Myrna Frost	2023
Anne Barron	2025
Suzanna Lai	2025

Nominees	
Marcy Scott	2026
Barrie Porter	2026

Nominating Committee Members (2 year term)

Current Members	Finishing Year
Cliff Shipmaker	2023
Koon Wah Leung	2023
Anja Turner	2024

Nominees	
Martin Bouwma	2025
Jin Lee	2025

Officers (1 year term, renewed)

Position	Current Officers
Moderator	Mike Penner
Vice-Moderator	Anja Turner
Treasurer	Geoff Moore
Vice-Treasurer	Koon Wah Leung
Clerk	Karen Cassel

We extend our **thanks** to those who have served and those who continue to serve our church.



spring garden church

Spirituality Grace Community

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2023