

ANNUAL REPORT

EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH OF
LETHBRIDGE | 2021-2022

WE DESIRE TO:

passionately follow the
Father and be transformed
into His likeness;

graciously enfold anyone
into our warm and loving,
Spirit-led family;

boldly love our community,
speaking hope through Jesus and
reaching out to those in need.

FROM THE BOARD

I want to let you know what a privilege it has been to serve EFCL these last 6 years. I love this church and I am thankful to God for His redemptive work in our midst.

As I review our last year of ministry at EFCL, I am struck by the contrasts of the journey. We have been through both difficult and awesome situations. God has been faithful in assuring me and the Board that one, He has never worked with a perfect church and two, He is the Redeemer. He takes broken things, blesses them, and makes things beautiful. As an outgoing Chair, I want to specifically thank the Board for working with me. They have been an encouragement and are a spectacular group of gifted individuals. God worked through all of them to show us the way forward.

– Rich Thiessen, former Board Chairman



The challenges of this past year were unusual and heavy. The Board asked for the resignation of our Lead Pastor. As a church, we have seen some of our other gifted ministry staff resign. We have seen people leave EFCL, some to worship elsewhere and others who are struggling to understand the value and meaning of “church and faith”. EFCL has had a year of financial challenges as well. We ended the year in a deficit position. All of these made for a very difficult journey. Those who consider EFCL their church body: thanks for your commitment and partnership.

Though there were dark times, there have been so many signs of the wonderful redemptive work of Christ in our midst. God led us to bring in Preston Busch as Transitional Pastor. Preston has been a great gift to our church, and I want to thank him for taking on this call. EFCL is also gifted with fantastic remaining staff. I am thrilled with the staff who continue to do the good work of ministry among us; what a gift you all are. There have been great additions to our staff family this year as well. What a joy and privilege to work beside you and get reports of your good ministry. Programs are running smoothly, and our church is alive with worship on Sundays. God is working within EFCL and in our community, and He is using the commitment of staff and volunteers at our local body of Christ. God is a faithful redeemer.

– Tyler Lammertsen, current Board Chairman



**PASSIONATELY
FOLLOW THE
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TRANSFORMED
INTO HIS
LIKENESS**

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

In March 2022, Children's Ministries experienced a shift from two full-time staff members (Director of Preschool Ministries and Director of Elementary Ministries) to one full-time Director of Children's Ministries.

It was challenging to pare back programming to a manageable level under one staff member, but this pruning helped clarify what was most important. We focused on developing a solid Sunday School program, rebuilding our volunteer base, and providing a weekday opportunity for connection through Escape.

With Sunday School development, a team of parents met and researched different curriculum ultimately deciding to switch to the Grow curriculum that Middle and High School Ministries were using. We also focused on building a solid foundation of Bible reading, prayer, giving, and church participation. We set goals for kids to feel safe, loved, and cared for; learn and grow in their knowledge of the Lord; develop a personal and authentic connection to Jesus; and have fun! Since March many families have returned to church. Sunday School numbers grew 38%.



I am so grateful for the generous volunteers who began to return when restrictions lifted, but we were only able to offer Sunday School for one morning service rather than two. We gave focus to four areas in working to rebuild our volunteer base:

- Volunteer process – ensuring that all volunteers have police checks; that volunteers are working in their areas of enjoyment; working with volunteer schedules to create longevity in wanting to serve in Children's Ministries
- Volunteer training – providing regular and ongoing training
- Updating child safety policy and procedures – creating effective training that is not time consuming to complete
- Encouraging youth volunteers with Kids' Ministries

We were able to continue providing a weekday opportunity for connection through Escape which attracted a growing number of ladies from our church and community.



I have been surprised by how much I am enjoying this job! I love getting to hold newborn babies; drinking coffee and visiting with parents during Escape; receiving beautiful cards and drawings from kids as well as hugs and smiles; planning activities for preschoolers and hearing about the things they are learning; seeing kids get up on stage and participate in services; hearing kids' stories about their lives and praying with them about whatever is on their hearts; seeing parents visit in the Kids' Zone after services while children run around and play, and I love the dedication and consistency of the volunteers that I have the privilege of working with.

Though some moments are chaotic, volunteers remain calm and composed. I love the ideas they bring. I especially love our youth helpers who bridge the gap between the little ones and the adult volunteers; they are fun, enthusiastic, and a huge help and I love working with my faithful and persevering check-in volunteers. I am new yet I feel warmly embraced. Staff are always willing to come alongside and help bring success to whatever I need their help with. I feel blessed!

– Kylie Dubber, Director of Children's Ministries

YOUTH MINISTRY

Middle School Ministries

I am so thankful for the team of volunteers who committed themselves to ministry this past year and who were so awesome to work with. Relaunching full blast in the fall was the big highlight. It was great to see so many youth we had only seen on Zoom the previous year finally get the full MSM, in person experience.

Considering our average weekly attendance was around 45 (MSM) and 60 (HSM) with about 20 volunteers each night and taking into account our average family size, I came to a fresh realization that Youth Ministry at E-Free is a far reaching ministry of the church. With our efforts to connect each individual student to a caring adult mentor, we were influencing cultural change that will come to fruition just years later as these youth continue to mature.

– Jared Friesen, former Director of Middle School Ministries



High School Ministries

This last year was incredible! We started and maintained in-person Youth for the whole year which was such an amazing gift after being online the year before. Youth looked really different as we navigated guidelines (often week to week), and while it wasn't always how we wanted, it was a blessing to gather together.



Though the year was amazing, it also held many challenges. Our Youth community walked through some difficult situations with our students, but God remained central, and we saw Him work in life-changing ways. We prioritized community and seeking God together, and our year finished off with four students getting baptized at our youth wrap up! It was truly amazing to hear the witness of how God is working in the lives of our students. Each spoke about how God was a comfort and a constant in such a difficult season.



Another highlight was that we were able to celebrate our grade 12's with a weekend away. It was a blessing to play, pray, and spend time away encouraging our students as they move onto life beyond high school. The weekend was full of so much laughter and fun, and I am grateful to have celebrated together!

Lastly, I want to highlight my amazing volunteer team! Youth could not happen without the faithful commitment of leaders who love and serve our youth so well. They were flexible and led well in what felt like constantly changing youth environments. They made each Youth night special as they took time to love and care for our students. I am grateful for the Youth Ministry community at E-Free.

– Chelsea van Schothorst, former Director of High School Ministries, current Director of Youth Ministries

YOUNG ADULTS

Overall, this past year was a great blessing. It began in a time of openness. Young adults were able to meet outside at host family homes, but as winter made its appearance and restrictions changed and shifted, we met masked at the church. It was great to continue meeting together, but it was even sweeter when restrictions eased where we could gather in host families' living rooms, remove masks, play games, eat, and engage in a way that felt less hindered. While many young adults struggled amidst COVID restrictions, it was encouraging to still see the commitment to community. Even in the struggles and disappointments and times when our patience and perseverance was tested, it was a joy to see people commit to faith and relationships.

This past year I was involved in Young Adults (YA) as a small group leader. I loved the experience and group I was in! I appreciated how YA was true to its name: Deeper. I experienced a community of young people who sought to go deeper with the Lord and with one another.

In the winter, my group decided to step out of our comfort zone and practice serving one another through foot washing, a new experience for all of us. We spent some time reading and discussing John 13, where Jesus washes the disciples' feet. It was a vulnerable experience that brought us closer as a group and as friends and helped us to see the love of God through Jesus Christ in a different light. It is a moment I look back on fondly and smile about.

I was also blessed to underscore Luke Watson's and Kayley van der Stoel's teaching through sharing my testimony with the larger YA community. I spoke from Exodus, about deliverance and intimacy with God and it gave me the amazing opportunity to see God stir in the lives of young adults with similar stories and experiences to mine.

What surprised me the most this year is that I did not anticipate or even dream of vocational ministry at E-Free as a possibility! This past year I was in pursuit of other plans, but God opened this door and affirmed and encouraged me all the way through.

I am anticipating seeing people grow in relationship with God and in their knowledge of God. I am anticipating seeing God use people's pasts and stories to bring glory to Himself and unity to the body. I am excited to see community grow and flourish as young adults do life together, and to see people grow in leadership and tackle difficult situations.

I love young adults' desires to deeply explore and discuss topics that can be difficult and uncomfortable, as well as their desire to see faith in action and build deep and meaningful connections with one another. I am beyond excited to see how God responds to and leads these desires as we learn, grow, and play together this year in Young Adults!

– Will Brososky, Director of Young Adults



BLESSED WITH VOLUNTEERS

As we learned through our study of Nehemiah, we all have a part to play. Men and women, adults and children, regardless of chosen career, we can all help to build and maintain “the wall”. Our church was abundantly blessed this past year with people willing to volunteer their time and expertise. As a result, we witnessed kingdom work taking place as so many helped care for our God given facility.

We had volunteers that came to help once, once a week, once a month, and over the duration of specific projects. They ranged in age from middle school to Prime Timers and we are so thankful for each one. The work isn’t glamorous, sometimes downright dirty, but through it, we have been given glimpses of joy, generosity, dedication, and good stewardship of the spaces to which God has entrusted us.

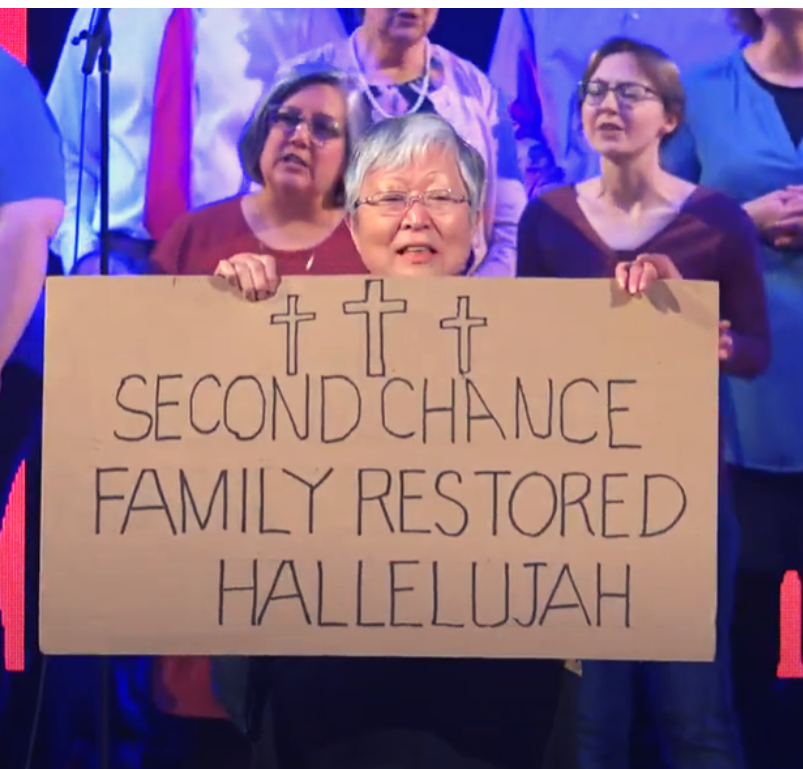
– Audra Enns, Facilities Manager





WORSHIP ARTS

As I reflect upon the past ministry year, one highlight that stands out was our Easter morning service with 1069 people in attendance, our highest since the pandemic. It felt amazing to worship with that number of people together in one morning. It was a powerful time of cardboard testimonies and transparent stories from people sharing of God's presence through many challenges and struggles.

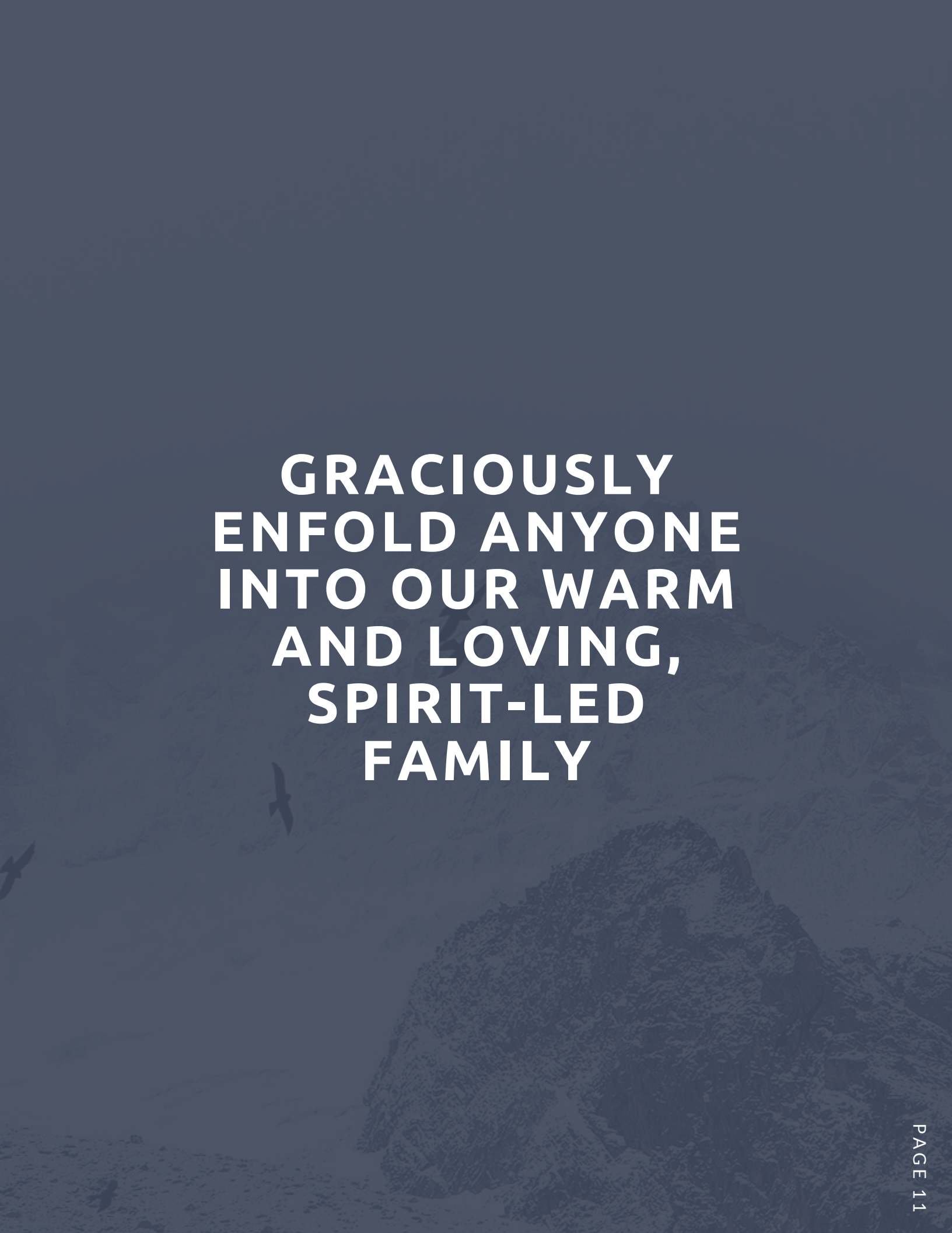


The overall ministry challenge of last year was sustaining services through ongoing staff and volunteer fluctuations. We are so grateful for the many volunteers that put in hundreds of hours as musicians, readers, sound operators, projectionists, ushers, greeters, coffee bar and information desk hosts, communion servers, prayer team members, service hosts and planners, set builders, costume designers, and actors. COVID, however, continued to affect volunteers' health and energy and we found ourselves often searching for last minute replacements for those suddenly struck down with illness as well as continually recruiting new volunteers to replace those who stepped back for the season.

Our overall prayer life as a church increased with life's challenges. E-Free's prayer team (Kara and Patrick Bayly, Jalen Lane, Blaine Stodolka, Doreen Van Ham, and myself) gave leadership to two weeks of prayer and fasting, along with four worship and prayer nights. Members of the prayer team also committed to remaining after the 10 am service to meet with anyone seeking prayer.

In the coming year, we look forward to rebuilding our in-person worship gatherings while at the same time continuing to learn how to minister to people who choose to join us online. We will be working to expand our volunteer teams. We hope, too, to see an ever-growing group of individuals using their creative gifts and abilities in a myriad of ways to help us as a congregation express our faith and love for the Lord.

– Ken Dosso, Minister of Worship Arts



**GRACIOUSLY
ENFOLD ANYONE
INTO OUR WARM
AND LOVING,
SPIRIT-LED
FAMILY**

ONLINE COMMUNITY



Our online service started as a necessity in 2020 but it did begin to grow into a community, as people interacted through the chat on a Sunday morning. It was hard to feel connected sometimes, but we heard numerous times how meaningful the online service was and how it kept them connected to their church family.


Three Stories of Impact:



I hadn't been attending church regularly since moving to Lethbridge in 2019. I had heard multiple people talk about E-Free and I'd driven by. Then in January 2021 E-Free's online service came up as a YouTube suggestion while I was listening to worship music. I first watched part of a service and then I watched an entire service the following week. I continued to watch online for several weeks. In February the church added additional in-person services to give more people the opportunity to attend while still maintaining COVID guidelines. I decided to attend the 11 am in-person service the following week. I felt welcomed as a pastor saw that I was new and came to introduce himself and have a conversation with me before the service started. After this, I emailed the church to enquire about Young Adults. That same week I attended a Little Deeper group on Thursday evening. From then on, I regularly attended Big and Little Deeper on Thursdays and started coming to the 6 pm service on Sundays. I was drawn to the church by the established young adults community. I realized how special it was to be able to gather with a lot of other young adults to worship Jesus. This was not something I saw much in my youth. I was baptized in May, invited to lead a small group in fall, and continued to build relationships with people. In February 2022, I attended the membership course and in June, I officially became a member of the church.

What I appreciate most about E-Free is how involved the church is with helping people in Lethbridge as well as internationally. Our effort to help people (giving kids school supplies, serving meals and providing clothing to people in need, etc.) shows our commitment to honour Jesus' command to love one another. In addition, I appreciate the resources that the church provides to help people within the congregation face life and faith issues. Even the seemingly small things can make a significant impact on people's lives, such as opening the church to children in the heat of summer to play in an air conditioned building.


– Michael



 Carolyn Walker · 6:20
Good morning everyone! Great to be here at virtual church!
Like Reply Hide 33w  2


 Evangelical Free Church of Lethbridge · 0:00
Good morning, Grant & Carolyn!
Like Reply 33w

 Trenton C Regier · 12:39
So good to be able watch a true live service.
Like Reply Hide 33w 

PAGE 12
Most Relevant is selected, so some replies may have been filtered out.

 Monica Wind Loewen · 43:16
I hope you are able to join us and light candles at home, as part of our community
Like Reply Hide 33w

 Margaret Mcallister · 11:46
Good morning. We are here watching from Mazatlan, Mexico. So nice to see a live service. God Bless
Like Reply Hide 33w  2

 Evangelical Free Church of Lethbridge · 0:00
So glad you're joining us! 😊

We had called Edson home since 2006 but once the last of our children were getting ready to leave home a few years ago, we decided it was time to move. We wanted someplace bigger than where we were but not a big city. We felt that God was wanting us where He would be able to utilize our experiences and serve Him. We felt we needed our spiritual intimacy to grow as we had found ourselves in a rut and Lethbridge became a possibility.

Finding a good church was one of the priorities in considering a new home. We knew Myron and Polly Krause were in Lethbridge and found that they were linked to E-Free so we started to watch online just as COVID was starting up. The services were great and through the worship and sermons from the various pastors we felt a strong calling to E-Free. We brought our daughter to check out the university education program just around the time restrictions were relaxed, and we were able to attend church in person. Once we returned home, we had the opportunity to take the online marriage course and continued to watch online on Sundays. In the fall of last year both our jobs were in question and God provided a job for Carmen in Lethbridge, so the decision was made. Her job was secured toward the end of November, and she started work on January 17 of this year. We were excited about our new adventure and although our friends may have thought we were crazy, we packed up and headed to our new life.

Upon arriving, we were able to reconnect with Polly and Myron and also connect quickly to some other members of the congregation. We are now starting to find where we belong in E-Free and between the two of us, we are involved with the Soup Kitchen, The Men's Room, The Gathering, and a Bible study. Praise God that initially during our search for a new home we were able to stay connected to the church online as He really used it to confirm where we were to go and give us peace with the move.

– Dwight and Carmen Blade

My husband Wes and I grew up in Brazil. In 2021 we began exploring the idea of a cross cultural experience for our family. With family in Ontario, Canada was an obvious choice, but as I began to consider the possibility of continuing my psychology career, Alberta offered more possibilities. I began exploring further education and was accepted at Lethbridge Community College. As our church in Brazil was the place where we experienced our community and support, I knew connecting with a church in Canada would be the way to find friends and build relationships. I started learning about Lethbridge online and one day a service from Evangelical Free Church of Lethbridge appeared in my YouTube feed. I watched part of a service. The following week, E-Free's service appeared on my home page again. I watched the whole service this time. The next week, I found myself anticipating Sunday and I began watching the service each week. I found my heart investing in this Canadian community, and I wanted to participate. One Sunday, Monica Loewen, who was hosting the service, invited anyone watching to say hello on Facebook, so I did. We continued to email one another. I learned she was expecting a grandchild and I wondered if I could send her a gift through Amazon. After the gift's successful arrival, I began sending items for E-Free's monthly giving campaigns. In August 2022 we finally arrived in Lethbridge. It has been wonderful to finally get to worship with the people of E-Free in person!

– Luciana Vilar

TECHNICAL MINISTRIES

Until March, Technical Ministries was producing a separate online service alongside four in-person services each week. It was a lot of work, but we had a good crew making it all happen. At the end of February social distancing limits were removed and we decided to stream the in-person service to help the online community feel more connected to the people meeting in the building. We worked hard to keep the quality of the online service consistent. It was really nice to gain back the energy of the congregation which we missed in the studio filmed services.

In the spring and summer, we saw the return of many volunteers who had taken a break over COVID. Though the crew shrunk a bit through the pandemic, we picked up several new team members this year along with the return of familiar faces. I am grateful for how the studio space has played a significant role in fostering relationships amongst the tech crew. The volunteer team is spread throughout the building on a Sunday morning, but the studio has provided a home base where volunteers can gather before and after the services allowing us to build community and a sense of team.

One volunteer I'd like to highlight is Zach Light who joined the team as a camera operator in fall 2021. He has been a dedicated volunteer showing up week after week. It has been awesome to see him develop skills and grow into a seasoned camera operator. He was able to use his talents at camp this summer on their media team. I'm encouraged by how many people are learning skills here at E-Free and not only using them at church but going out and sharing them with the wider community.

– Mike Dosso, Director of Technical Ministries



SENIORS' MINISTRIES

Dave Acree

Most significantly, Seniors Ministries saw the retirement of Pastor Dave Acree in January. Dave started work at E-Free in August 2005 as Associate Pastor of Congregational Care and Education. Responsibilities included ministry to seniors, curriculum development, leader for Traditions, and mentor. In 2011, he was officially employed by the Evangelical Free Church of Canada (EFCC) with a half-time secondment to EFCL. In 2018, Dave left the employment of EFCC and moved to just a half-time position with the EFCL. Responsibilities continued as above, minus curriculum development, until his retirement and somewhere along the line, his title changed to Minister to Seniors.

Dave brought an “elder statesman” quality in the form of wisdom, experience, and sage advice both to the church and to the staff. As an avid reader of both non-fiction and fiction, he never stopped learning and evaluating new ideas. He continues to walk the talk of his faith, is always willing to engage in conversation, and models how to age without growing old.

This was specifically exemplified in the way Dave faced his recent health concerns. Dave has always been physically active. Even when his hip pain was acute, he didn't want to move his office from the second floor to the main floor. He insisted that it was good for him to keep moving, even if that meant climbing up a flight of stairs. It was agonizing to watch him slowly make his way up one step at a time, but he was determined. It was a good lesson to keep moving ahead, even if it's just one step at a time.

– Cindy Smith, Minister of Administration



Though retired, Dave and Julie remain active members of the congregation. Dave continues to provide spiritual direction for Prime Timers gatherings, frequently closing events with inspiring devotionals.

Both Dave and Julie have been instrumental in our hymn sings, leading music, weaving through thoughts and devotions, as well as sharing the background and history of hymns and we are so grateful for all the ways they continue to serve.

– Gloria Keim, Prime Timers Lead Team

Traditions

A Seniors' Task Force was put together in October to discuss vision and direction in anticipation of Dave's retirement. There was significant concern about being left without a shepherd but to our great blessing, Myron Krause stepped in as Interim Community Pastor through July and really connected with people.

– Gloria Keim, Prime Timers Lead Team



Prime Timers

After a year and a half hiatus, Prime Timers events began again in December with a Christmas carol evening. Over 100 people attended the carol evening including several families with their children. People loved singing the traditional carols and having the opportunity to gather as a church family.

We enjoyed two hymn sings, one in April and one in May, where, again, we were delighted to see young and old gather to worship.

We concluded the year in June with the KFC Workout. We invited Brittany Wilton, a Recreation Therapist to this year's annual chicken dinner where she led us through an entertaining evening of physical and mental activities.



As a longstanding, stable community, this lively group was so grateful to once again fellowship around food and have the opportunity to build relationships and socialize.

– Gloria Keim, Prime Timers Lead Team



Membership Class

Every class is good, and every class is unique! One of my favourites was where we had Elva Kenyon, a woman in her 80s in the same class with a 19-year-old woman. It was an encouraging picture of diversity in our church family and a demonstration of commitment to one another that transcended generations. When Elva was asked why she was attending the membership class, she said that though her husband thought they were too old to take out membership and she was in the late stages of cancer, she believed it was important that one should make a commitment to whatever congregation was their church home. Elva Kenyon passed away this past year as a member of the EFCL.

– Jeremy Light, Minister of Discipleship



DISCIPLESHIP

Small Groups

This was a hard year for small groups with gathering restrictions constantly changing and cautions about COVID colouring many people's experiences of community. Many leaders worked hard to keep their groups connected by calling and texting, meeting online, gathering when allowed, and caring for one another through the ups and downs.

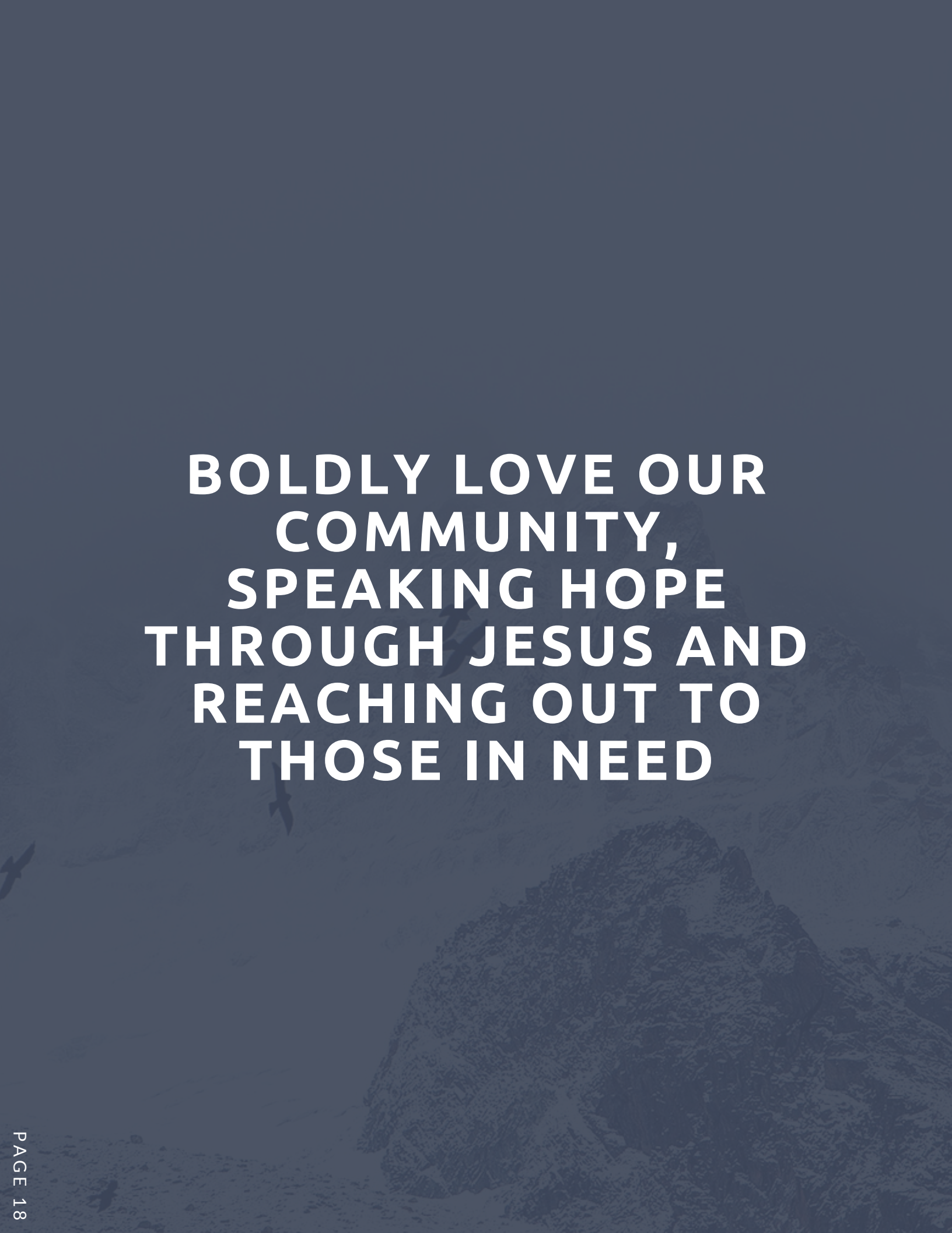
– Jeremy Light, Minister of Discipleship

Spencer and Ainsley Croil are two of the leaders who continued to faithfully serve and lead their group.

The highlight for our group was the ongoing effort we put into keeping in touch and being available and committed to each other. We struggled from time to time to set a schedule that we could all commit to, but we reached out to another group early last year to for advice. They suggested setting aside separate time for women's and men's study, and time for family to get together. This allowed us to avoid the stress of finding childcare as the dads could stay at home while the moms met, and vice versa. One tradition that we will continue is our annual outside movie night. Getting the kids all settled with popcorn and snacks, and just being with each other in those moments, always brings a smile to our faces. Although these evenings aren't centered around a study or in overtly sharing in our faith, we embrace the experience as a representation of our commitment to each other.

– Spencer and Ainsley Croil





**BOLDLY LOVE OUR
COMMUNITY,
SPEAKING HOPE
THROUGH JESUS AND
REACHING OUT TO
THOSE IN NEED**

WOMEN'S DISCIPLESHIP

I pulled into Tim Horton's parking lot keeping my eye open for Rose* (name and details changed for privacy reasons). She had described herself in her email, so I knew whom to look for. We had never met, but she had reached out via email noticing that we had a special place on our website for women. The subject line in her email had said "Interested in getting closer to God".

These moments are not uncommon. In a world that is full of difficulty and there are so many barriers to help, the church is a place that people still turn to.

I spotted Rose and was met with a warm yet hesitant smile. With iced coffees, we slid into a booth and talked a little about how hot it was outside, where we both grew up, and what our days looked like. In a moment of pause, she took a deep breath, like being prepared to go under the water, and said, "I am an addict." With tears, she told me her story about a life that was hard and where escape seemed the only way to survive. We talked for two hours without stopping.

Rose had no support trying to leave life on the streets. She was living in a garage without a window, in the heat of summer, but never once complained. She had dreams for what her life could be and was making the hard choices to get there. She was honest and knew the roadblocks in her path and talked openly about them. This young woman's courage, resiliency, gentleness, and wisdom were astounding.

But what astounded me more was what she told me about her experience with God when I asked her about the subject line in her email. She said that she had never tried praying, but recently, feeling desperate, she prayed. And she heard God whisper to her, "You are mine and you are loved." These were not words she heard often in her life. She remembered that a family member had a Bible. She asked to borrow it and had started reading. Rose said, "I don't know how this happened, but God is leading me. I know He loves me. I know He wants to know me."

These moments are extraordinary. I shouldn't be surprised that God is in the hard places. Yes, God is a part of Sunday morning worship, but He is also with us when we feel we're out of options. God meets us who regularly study the Word, but he also meets people opening a borrowed Bible for the first time. He is in this world. Everywhere.

Throughout this year we saw God in Bible studies as women invested in their life of faith.

We saw God at Mom Collective as we offered support and connection in table groups and mentoring relationships. We saw God at our IF Conference as women throughout the city watched in small groups and talked about navigating life with hope in a weary world.

This year I am reminded particularly of the vastness and intimacy of God as He looks over his creation and says, "You are mine and you are loved."

– Glenda Postman, former Director of Discipleship



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Monica Loewen gave greater ministry emphasis to our local community starting in December 2020 as Minister of Community Engagement. Sadly, budget did not support the continuation of this position for the upcoming year, but we celebrate the great things that were accomplished in this role.

We are pleased we were able to grow deeper relationships between E-Free and different community organizations, particularly Lethbridge School District 51. We love that Family Support Workers know that E-Free is a place committed to helping families within our community. They know they could always bring their requests and we would do what we could.

We were also able to engage with the City of Lethbridge's Social Services Integration Group – a committee made up of community members that was tasked to create criteria for potential social services. This was a brand new opportunity that E-Free was invited to be a part of as a representative of the faith community.

Through the benevolence program, we were able to provide tangible help to people in our greater community, rather than just within our congregation. We didn't meet every need but made a real effort to make sure every person who called received something, whether that was financial assistance, physical help, or a referral to someone in the community who could help.

Our monthly giving box campaigns was another new venture where we have been encouraged by your expressions of generosity. It was always encouraging to see the faces of gratitude as these tangible gifts were delivered.

- Spices - Food Banks
- Weekend Groceries - Lethbridge School Division, Poverty Intervention Committee
- Feminine Hygiene Products, Socks, Underwear - Harbour House, Streets Alive
- Diapers, Formula, Baby Items - Lethbridge Pregnancy Care Centre, Victoria Park High School
- Sunscreen, Bug Spray, Aloe Vera Gel - SABC, Streets Alive, Interfaith Food Bank
- School Supplies - Wilson Middle School

– Monica Loewen, former Minister of Community Engagement



KIDS CLOTHING ROOM

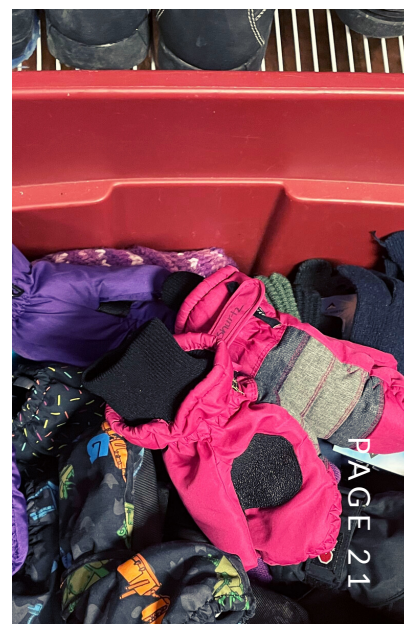
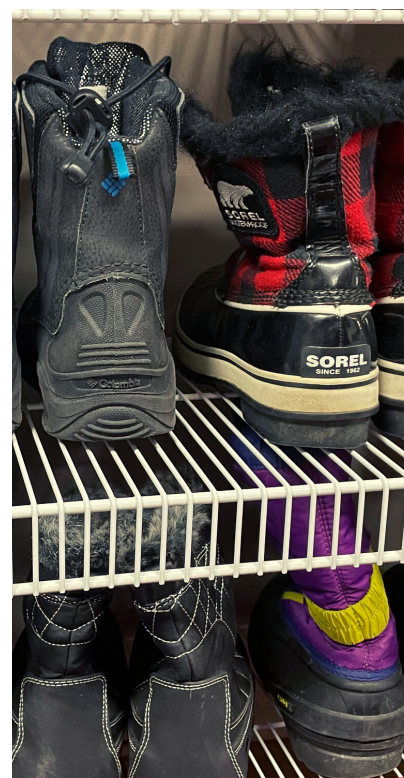
It has been a great encouragement to see individuals from across the city of Lethbridge go home with much needed items from the Kids Clothing Room. We opened this resource in October 2021 and have seen visitors three to five times a week since then.

Three Stories of Impact:

Wilson Middle School reached out when they heard about our clothing room to see if we could help a student who had recently experienced a significant growth spurt and no longer had clothes that fit or funds to replace their wardrobe. Sensitive to the value of appearance and self-confidence for middle school students, we took the time to ask if there was any particular item the student was hoping to find. What they really hoped for was a pair of black jeans. We found two pairs of jeans in the student's size and were struck by God's specific provision that might have mattered little to most people but would have mattered a great deal to this student in need.

Last winter, while taking the trash out to the dumpster behind the church, we met a woman going through a bag of garbage. It was a chilly snowy day and she was not dressed for the weather. She was invited to come inside for a cup of coffee and to find a few items in our Clothing Room. We discovered she was living in a parking lot in the industrial area and that, on occasion, the owner of the lot would let her make a fire in a barrel to stay warm. The woman tried on clothes, found a winter coat, snow pants, and some other items she could layer, and remarked that what our room needed was a mirror and she had just the thing! She dropped off a full length mirror later that week.

Not long after taking a new position at Lakeview Elementary School, Rosie Fraser encountered a mother whose child had their boots stolen at school. She couldn't afford to replace them. Rosie remembered the Kids Clothing Room and suggested she visit the church. When the family arrived, we noticed that the arm and side of the child's winter coat was torn. The mother not only found boots but was also able to replace the coat allowing her to afford groceries for her family that month.



CROSS-CULTURAL MINISTRIES



Intercultural Ministries continued to be led by a deeply committed and invested volunteer team which offered friendship and support by informally connecting with people in parks and homes as well as through several game nights, visiting a corn maze and Hutterite colony, Christmas and Easter gift distributions, and our second annual Fall Festival. Of note was our chili dinner in May where we celebrated those who became Canadian citizens and permanent residents. Like many of our activities, turnout surpassed expectations, with approximately 130 in attendance. Most importantly, relationships were built, and opportunities opened for Christian witness.

We are seeing enormous potential and increased connection between our local Intercultural Ministries and our Global Outreach involvements, giving credence to the perspective that all missions are cross-cultural whether at home or abroad. The integration between our local and global cross-cultural involvements was particularly evident this past year in our Conversation Café ESL (English as a second language) class and Japanese missionary Yuji Iwata's visit.

- When COVID restrictions forced Conversation Café to move online we anticipated challenges, but also discovered former and new students in other countries were able to join. This is one reason that Conversation Café continues to meet online to this day.
- Yuji visited Lethbridge in August and met two International students from Japan at one of our intercultural events. After the students returned home, Yuji invited them to help start an ESL class in Japan.



Our church's passion for global witness was evident in the generous response to our Advent Conspiracy campaign that focused on "Proclaiming the Gospel in Latin America in Word and Deed". \$108,685 was split evenly between a ShareWord Global project in Cuba and a Canadian Foodgrains Bank project in Guatemala. We continued to support 4 agencies and 11 couples and individuals around the world, though we also had several missionaries step away from their involvement this past year and several others approach retirement. With that in mind, efforts were made to develop a new strategic plan for Global Outreach, which is now in its final stages of development. It became evident during the planning process that we have a rich legacy to build on as missions have received high priority in our church for decades.

Training is a growing priority in our Cross-Cultural Ministries. While COVID restrictions made it challenging to realize some plans, particularly related to offering Kairos courses, we had several people attend the 2022 Missions Central Conference online. This stimulated considerable conversation, especially among nine participants from our Intercultural Ministries leadership team who attended the seminar "126 Ways to Welcome Immigrants to Canada". Our church also sought to deepen understanding about truth and reconciliation with Canada's indigenous people. Our young adults engaged cultural experiences with the indigenous community and eight leaders in our church took a course on "Canadian Indigenous Realities and the Canadian Church". We hope this will be a maturing conversation in the years ahead.

– Myron Krause, Minister of Outreach

THANK YOU

General Fund: \$2,164,596

Budget: \$2,914,633

Building Fund: \$17,977

For the 2021-2022 fiscal year, we had set a faith goal of over \$2.9 million dollars, but our giving fell behind. We trusted that even in the midst of COVID and uncertain times, that God would meet all of our needs. We have been humbled to watch His faithfulness to our church family as He has carried us through these difficult circumstances.

Thank you to each of you who have given to the church this year. Your faithful giving has allowed us to be the church to each other and to our city.



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