



Annual General Meeting

May 29, 2023

Lead Pastor Report

This year the staff has often spoken about services that seemed normal again, and by normal, we meant pre-Covid. This was seen most clearly in our Christmas and Easter services.

With the lifting of restrictions, we were able to meet on 53 Sundays this past year. (Yes, 53 Sundays, it was one of those years.) For the first time since 2019, we met every Sunday.

In the past twelve months, we have welcomed over twenty new families into our Cornerstone Family, including many with no recent church connection. This represents 53 adults and children. It has been exciting to see these new folks connecting in Life groups as well as our children and teen ministries.

We averaged 164 folks in our combined Sunday morning services, which is a twenty percent increase over last year's figure. Through the years, I've said, "We count numbers because numbers count." And while it sounds trite, it is a reality. Every number at Cornerstone represents a person we've been entrusted with.

During the past year, we have celebrated four baptisms. Most of those baptized were teens and children who are taking a stand early for Christ and His Church. As well as the baptisms, I was privileged to take part in a baby dedication and a baby naming ceremony. We have celebrated numerous births and new births. We have also grieved with families as we held four memorial services this past year.

Angela and I have prayed specifically for each family at Cornerstone multiple times over the past twelve months. If you have received an email saying that we prayed for you, rest assured that we prayed for you and each member of your family by name. The emails may have been a cut-and-paste, but the prayers weren't.

On Christmas Eve, we celebrated the birth of Christ with almost 400 of our friends and neighbours in our four different services. Cornerstone is called home by many folks in our community, even if they only come home for Christmas and Easter. But that is often how it begins, and what better time to experience church than to celebrate the birth and resurrection of our Lord?

A big thank-you to the many people who gave up their Christmas Eve to lead and participate in these services.

Cornerstone Live continues to provide live streaming for our Gatehouse services as well as several special events. Our service is watched on a regular basis by our own shut-ins as well as people who are experiencing Cornerstone for the first time.

The Cornerstone family continues to impact the community through our compassion ministries. Thanksgiving at Ronald McDonald House, our monthly contributions to Beacon House (FEED Nova Scotia”, and the numerous families who are provided with grocery gift cards are all integral parts of who we are and how we serve.

Our Sierra Leone partnership with World Hope and the village of Kenenday began a new phase this year as Cornerstone and the Cornerstone family now sponsor a combined 80 children in the village. This year we began the process of training and certifying all of the teachers in the school that we were able to construct last year. This will have a major impact on teachers and students alike.

We have rented our facilities (buildings and parking lot) to various community and commercial groups this year. Often this allows the staff to connect with community members who have no other connection to Cornerstone.

We hosted the Kingswood Rate Payers general meeting and provided a meeting place for their directors on a regular basis, along with providing regular meeting space for the Hammonds Plains Historical Society.

At the district level, I continue to serve on the District Board of Administration Executive in the position of District Secretary as well as serving as District Director of Global Partners. This year I was able to represent the district and our District Superintendent at two district funerals.

With the lifting of restrictions, we were able to begin our Men’s Breakfasts again, using both of our campuses. It is great to see our men connect outside of Sunday Mornings. Kudos to Bruce Barteaux and his great kitchen and clean-up teams.

We also saw our “Joy” (Just Older Youth) group meet again after a three-year hiatus for an evening of fun. Looking forward to more opportunities for building community at Cornerstone.

Thank you to our staff and volunteers, who do an awesome job of making sure everything comes together the way it’s supposed to. As well we couldn’t do it without all who assist in the week-to-week operation of Cornerstone. Thank you to those who have helped to make Cornerstone what it is.

Of course, none of this would be possible without all the help, support, prayers and encouragement that I receive from Angela.

Stay Safe and Stay Blessed
Pastor Denn Guptill

Cornerstone Youth

I am thrilled to present to you a report highlighting the remarkable achievements and progress of our vibrant youth group over the past year. It is with great joy and excitement that I share this update, as we witness the incredible growth and engagement within our youth community.

In addition to the remarkable achievements and milestones within our youth group, it brings me great joy to share a significant aspect of our ministry: the celebration of baptisms and salvations. This year, we have witnessed the transformative power of God's love as one student was baptized, publicly declaring their faith and commitment to follow Christ. We also have another baptism planned in the near future, further highlighting the spiritual growth and genuine commitments taking place within our youth community. Moreover, we have been blessed to witness numerous positive commitments and heartfelt decisions made by our students as they deepen their relationship with God. These salvations and spiritual commitments are testaments to the life-changing work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of our youth. We rejoice in these profound moments and anticipate further growth and transformation in the lives of our students as they continue to embrace their faith journey.

Our average attendance for our youth group this year was an impressive 25 individuals. Furthermore, I am thrilled to inform you that we had the privilege of experiencing exceptional moments when our numbers exceeded expectations. We celebrated six occasions where we welcomed over 30 enthusiastic students, and our highest attended regular youth night reached a staggering 37 attendees. These milestones serve as a testament to the inviting and inclusive environment we have fostered, where our youth feel comfortable and eager to participate.

In October, we embarked on a transformative journey, taking 21 individuals to the Encounter Rally at Kingswood. This powerful experience allowed our youth to deepen their faith, connect with peers from other churches, and encounter God in a profound way. Witnessing the impact of this event on our students' spiritual growth was truly inspiring, and we are committed to providing more opportunities like this in the future.

As we reflect on the past year, one particular event stands out as a highlight for our youth group. In June, we eagerly attended the One Conference, gathering together in person for the first time in two years. It was an unforgettable experience, filled with worship, powerful messages, and the strengthening of bonds among our students. Sixteen of our dedicated youth members attended this event, and their enthusiasm and passion were contagious. Looking ahead, we are eagerly anticipating the upcoming One Conference in Moncton, where we anticipate even greater blessings and spiritual growth.

We recognize the financial commitments associated with these transformative rallies and conferences, which is why we have taken proactive steps to organize more fundraisers. By actively engaging in fundraising initiatives, we aim to offset costs and ensure that financial limitations do not hinder any student from participating in these milestone moments. We

firmly believe that these events are pivotal opportunities for our students to grow in their faith, and we are dedicated to making them accessible to all.

Additionally, I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to Lynn and Chad for their remarkable dedication and commitment in ministering to our Senior High students. Their tireless efforts, passion for mentoring, and unwavering support have played an instrumental role in guiding our older youth members through the challenges and triumphs of their faith journeys. Lynn and Chad, your wisdom, compassion, and genuine care for our students have made an indelible impact, and we are truly blessed to have you leading our Senior High ministry.

I would also like to express my deepest thanks to Ed, Kristen, Jim, Jackson, and Lyndsay for their invaluable contributions as leaders within our youth group. Your selflessness, patience, and ability to actively listen have created a safe and nurturing environment for our students to connect, share, and grow. Your dedication to the spiritual development of our youth, coupled with your unwavering support and mentorship, have been instrumental in shaping their lives. Your commitment to investing time, energy, and love into our youth community is truly commendable, and I am incredibly grateful for your continued presence and impact.

Together, Lynn, Chad, Ed, Kristen, Jim, Jackson, and Lyndsay, you have collectively created a team of leaders who exemplify the heart of servant leadership. Your unwavering commitment to the growth and well-being of our students has not gone unnoticed, and your presence within our ministry is a true blessing. Thank you for your invaluable contributions, your dedication, and your genuine love for our youth. You are making a profound difference in their lives, and for that, we are eternally grateful.

In conclusion, I am immensely proud of the accomplishments of our youth group and the positive impact we continue to make in the lives of our young members. Through our gatherings, rallies, and conferences, we are providing an environment where faith flourishes, friendships are formed, and personal growth thrives. I extend my deepest gratitude to each ministry leader for your unwavering support and commitment to the youth of our church.

May we continue to uplift and encourage the next generation, empowering them to embrace their faith, discover their purpose, and become catalysts for positive change in our church and community.

Cornerstone Music

It is with great joy and gratitude that I present to you an uplifting report on the wonderful achievements and progress within our worship ministry. Our team of talented individuals has worked tirelessly to create an atmosphere of worship and praise that nurtures the hearts and souls of our congregations. Here are the highlights of our recent endeavors:

I am delighted to share that our music ministry team, including tech personnel, consists of a dedicated group of 35 individuals across our Gatehouse and Windgate locations. Each member plays a crucial role in leading our congregation into worship, and their commitment and passion are truly commendable.

A special recognition goes out to Angela, who has faithfully organized and led our worship services at the Windgate campus. Her dedication and leadership have been instrumental in creating meaningful worship experiences for our congregation, and we are immensely grateful for her steadfast commitment.

I would also like to express heartfelt appreciation to the exceptional musicians who consistently serve at both locations. Your unwavering dedication to Cornerstone Church and your willingness to contribute to the worship experience in multiple venues is both inspiring and encouraging. Your talent and commitment have significantly enriched our worship services, and we are grateful for your contributions.

One aspect of our worship ministry that brings me immense joy is witnessing the active involvement of our youth students. They go above and beyond, participating in various roles such as running slide shows, operating livestream cameras, managing lighting, playing musical instruments, singing, and even leading songs. Their enthusiasm, skill, and willingness to serve are a testament to their deep love for God and their desire to actively engage in worship. Our youth truly are the church of today, and I am continuously impressed by their contributions.

Recently, we had a powerful prayer service that ignited a desire for more prayer and worship gatherings. I want to express my heartfelt appreciation to everyone who attended and participated in that evening. Your presence and involvement were instrumental in creating a powerful atmosphere of worship and intercession. Moving forward, we will be organizing more gatherings of this nature, providing opportunities for our congregation to come together in heartfelt prayer and worship.

In line with our commitment to reaching and connecting with a broader audience, we have been making significant upgrades to our livestream setup. The improvements in sound and video quality have enhanced the virtual worship experience for those who are unable to attend in person due to health concerns or geographical distance. This valuable ministry enables individuals to remain connected with our church community.

In conclusion, I want to express my deepest gratitude to each member of our worship ministry team. Your talent, dedication, and unwavering commitment have contributed to creating an atmosphere of worship that touches lives and draws people closer to God. I also extend my heartfelt appreciation to the congregation for your active participation, support, and encouragement.

May our worship continue to be a source of inspiration, healing, and unity, leading us into the presence of God and empowering us to live lives that bring glory to His name.

With sincere appreciation,

Stefan Gilbert
Assistant Pastor

Pastor of Family Care

Children's Ministry

2022-2023 was the first year since 2018-2019 that we were able to complete a full year without restrictions in our children's program! What a blessing! We have certainly experienced a year of regrowth and a return to many of our pre-pandemic procedures. This has helped to create stability and continuity in our programs.

The fall started off with a Volunteer Kick-Off Event where I was able to present our newly revised and reworked Volunteer Handbook. This event gave us the opportunity to present all the Child Safety Guidelines to our volunteers but also, to share the Vision for CS Kids' and present the Mission we have before us while giving the volunteers clear expectations for their role as part of the CS Kids' Team.

Our volunteers are an integral part of our Children's ministry. Our current program could not function without you! It has been exciting to see what God has done and will do through our CS Kids' Team as we work together to shepherd and educate the current generation of children to embrace a lifelong relationship with Jesus. Truly our impact is greater together!

We have been blessed, at our Gatehouse location, to have had 50 volunteers invest in our weekly programs at some time this past year. We currently have 45 volunteers on our regular roster, and there are at least 8 in the process of completing their Child Safety Screening so they can join the team.

This past year, between our two locations, we have had a combined average attendance of 35 children, which was up from last year's average of 28. But we have had a total of 127 individual children attend our Sunday CS Kids' program at some point over the year! 92 of these would be

considered “regular” attendees. As you can see, one of the biggest challenges facing the Children’s Ministry is consistency of attendance. Other churches as well attest to this being one of the greatest challenges of our current post-pandemic season.

In light of this, we have endeavoured to provide opportunities for families to build relationships among the church community. One way we have done this is by hosting two Family Game Nights. The first had 23 in attendance, and the second had 44 in attendance, and this is something we plan to continue to offer in the coming year.

In October, we also switched from the *Orange* curriculum we had used for many years to *Grow* curriculum. This created a significant financial savings and has continued to provide us with up-to-date, high-quality resources for our programs. This coming year, I am excited to share that *Grow* is also adding music videos, a Bible reading program for the children and enhancing some of the resources they have already been providing. Combined with the resourcefulness of our leaders, we have been able to offer quality programs to our children each Sunday with a strong emphasis on knowing God’s Word and being able to apply it in our everyday life.

We had an *End of School/Beginning of Summer Celebration* at the end of June, a *Steppin’ Up Sunday* in September when the children moved up to their next class level, a *Fall Celebration Day* on Oct 30th, and a *Christmas Party* in December. There were special activities and treats on Easter Sunday and another celebration day is planned for June 25th.

As always, one of the biggest highlights for me is having the opportunity to lead children and their parents through the *Starting Point* and *Baptism for Kids* curriculum. These are times where we can have focused discussions about what it means to follow Jesus and what baptism is and isn’t. From these sessions, we had three children follow through by being baptized.

On a District level, I was able to attend a Next Gen leader round table in the fall, and Stefan and I were able to host the District Next Gen Connect event for Nova Scotia here at Cornerstone in April.

These are a few details about Kids’ Ministry, but the meaningful moments are when parents say their children love coming to CS Kids, when new children are smiling and making friends, when a child states: “Jesus doesn’t have the power, He is the power!”, and when a child shares at a presentation at school that CS Kids’ has had a profound impact on him, his belief in Jesus and his desire to be obedient by getting baptized. These are the things that matter, and this is why I serve and why I so appreciate your service as well.

Women’s Ministry

This has been a year of growth both numerically and spiritually within the Women’s Ministries. We doubled the number of Women’s events this year from last year. Last year we were able to have one, and this year we had two! Both were very well done, thanks to the great team of ladies who stepped up to make them happen. At Christmas time, we had 53 ladies join, and

then in March, we had 28 ladies out for an amazing breakfast and a great time of connecting and reconnecting.

It is my goal, and one shared by the planning committee, to see this grow to at least four events this coming year.

As well we had four ladies attend the Harvest Conference in Quispamsis in October. It was a powerful weekend, and we are planning to promote this event, even more this coming fall.

I was blessed to lead two ladies' study groups again this fall. Between the two groups, we averaged 16 attendees weekly, but we had 29 women involved in the groups. We dove into four different studies this year, which challenged and encouraged each of us in our spiritual journey. This time together has also built and deepened friendships within the group as we support and pray for each other.

Along with these areas of ministry, I have been able to meet, counsel and encourage several women through one-on-one meetings.

I have been blessed to attend several training sessions and conferences this year which have been very helpful in expanding my capacity as a leader and a shepherd in all areas of my ministry.

Thank you so very much for the opportunity to serve at Cornerstone. The future is bright as we move forward together in His service.

Respectfully submitted,

Pastor Marilyn Mansvelt

Cornerstone in Action

Over the last year, we have continued with our 30 sponsored children from Kenenday. It is so powerful praying for them each week in our service. We have also had the opportunity to increase the education of some of the teachers from the community so that they can better provide for their families. This education allows them to obtain the proper degrees in order for their salaries to be paid by the government. This frees up more money from World Hope to provide for other needs.

We continue to provide financially to World Hope throughout the year for various programs and projects around the globe. It is fantastic that we have a trustworthy organization to partner with as a church.

We did a coat drive with Parker Street Food Bank, Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes, and of course, our chunky soup and evaporated milk.

In October, we heard from Robin and Yoko and their work in Japan with Global Partners, Tanya Nace with an update on our village partnership through World Hope, and Peter Lublink from Bethany Kids.

We continue to support Global Partners missionaries around the globe on a monthly basis as they continue to spread the love of Jesus in hard places.

A half dozen people met in the Spring to discuss the missions work at Cornerstone and to dream of what the future will bring for how we can continue making a difference locally and globally.

I am excited to see what we do next as a church and how we will make a difference near and far.

Respectfully submitted,

Pastor Deborah Gilbert

Cornerstone Windgate

As I reflect on the last year, I am thankful for God's faithfulness to us as at the Windgate site as we seek to connect with the Sackville/Beaver Bank/Fall River area. This last year has been a good year, and while I always try to live with a "Holy Discontent" that keeps me seeking more of what God has for us I am thankful for all that he has done over the last year.

The highlight for me is continuing to work with our leaders, their dedication continues to inspire me. We have a great group of faithful people who continue to serve selflessly in each area of the church. The way they respond to the needs is inspiring and something that I am very thankful to be a part of.

Some additional things that took place over the last year are:

- Connections that are forming as people get to know each other. This last year we have had a freedom to connect that we have not had since starting Windgate, and several people who either didn't know each other or who only had a general awareness of each other are beginning to connect in new ways.

- Developed a nursery/preschool ministry. With Covid, this was a ministry that we were not able to have. This past year Linda MacDonnell stepped in and began leading it after a family came with a young child and saw that we didn't have one. Linda spoke to the family and said that if they came back, we would have a nursery for them to bring their child to, and we have had a staffed nursery every week since that day.
- Transitioned our Kids Ministry leadership from Julie King to Julie McDowell. Julie King stepped down when her and Greg had their second baby this last year. Thankful for all that Julie King did to help our Kids Ministry get started at the church.
- We started several Windgate based Life groups this last year as well, this aspect of the ministry has been one of the bigger challenges to push through and an area where we want to continue to grow and develop.
- Developed a social space/fire pit last summer that has been used by the youth group some but not something we have yet to take full advantage of.
- We saw several new people that came and got connected to Windgate. We have seen a continued increase of new people over the last year that has had a positive impact on both the atmosphere of worship gatherings and the overall culture of the church.

Personal Areas of Responsibility:

- General leadership at the Windgate site
- Weekly staff meetings
- Pastoral care and counselling
- Non-voting member of the leadership team
- Preaching team
- Supporting the different Windgate leaders

Respectfully Submitted,

Pastor Rob McDowell