



2023-24

Annual Report

TOUCHING OUR WORLD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, ONE LIFE AT A TIME.



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Meeting Agenda

September 22, 2024

12:30 pm

1. Call to Order
2. Reflections from Pastor Daniel
3. Approval of Minutes of AGM 2023
4. Election of Members for the Nominating Committee
5. Election of Elders
6. Financial Report
7. Appointing of the Auditor for 2024-2025
8. Presentation of the 2024-2025 Budget
9. Report from Tellers
10. Other Business
11. Prayer
12. Adjournment

Minutes from 2023

Sunday, September 24, 2023

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair, Johnny Chan Kin, called the meeting to order at 12:55 pm. He gave thanks for God's provision and the generous giving of the congregation. He praised God for bringing our new Youth and Young Adults Pastor, Justin Hsu, for all the new families, and for our Prayer Team Leadership, Salome Alagaratnam, Cheryl Roe, and Donna Rawana for their leading of the Prayer Ministry. He also thanked Pastor Daniel for preaching God's Word. He urged us to pray for peace as we go forward after today's vote and continue to fulfill God's mandate to make disciples. He opened in prayer.

2. REFLECTIONS FROM PASTOR DANIEL MILLS

Pastor Daniel expressed how blessed and encouraged he felt by the variety of testimonies shared at the morning service and in the Ministry Report. He first thanked the Lord for his strength and grace this past ministry year. He encouraged all the members to read the reports from the ministry leaders. He thanked his wife, Laura, the Staff and Elders for their support, their work and love for the Lord. He also thanked the members and volunteers of the church for serving Jesus at UAC. He expressed his joy on just how many unchurched, non-Christian people have been touched by our various ministries this past year, particularly through our summer camps and Alpha. He praised our congregation for their generosity as we have been able to finish our fiscal year in the positive despite the huge expense of connecting the church to the city of Markham sewer system. He then shared about what we will be learning during our Sunday messages this coming year. He exhorted the members to maintain a sense of unity. Pastor Daniel clarified that the C&MA has affirmed both leadership models regarding the role of women in ministry. He thanked the many people who encouraged and prayed for him.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF 2022

Moved by Tony Miles. Seconded by Rob Smith. Motion carried with a vote by a show of hands.

4. ELECTION OF ELDERS

Two elders were up for re-election for their second term as elders: Nesa Gulasekharam and Les Miyata. Vote results will be reported at the end of the meeting.

5. RESOLUTION REGARDING ELECTION OF ELDERS

Johnny Chan Kin reviewed the resolution of the membership composition of the Board of Elders. He stated that the Board and the Staff have been fasting and praying during the week, and encouraged that we vote under a spirit of unity. Terry Doner and Salome Alagaratnam are the tellers for the vote.

6. ELECTION OF MEMBERS FOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Regie Bitong's and Nancy Wilson's names were nominated to be on the Nominating Committee for 2024. Moved by Winston Miller. Seconded by Barb Doner. Motion carried with a vote by a show of hands.

7. FINANCIAL REPORT

The Treasurer, Nesa Gulasekharam, presented key elements from the audited financial statement. He thanked God for the faithful giving of our congregation and went on to thank Mary Daniele for all the bookkeeping she does and Pastor Daniel for his diligence with the budgeting.

8. APPOINTING OF THE AUDITOR FOR 2023-2024

Motion to appoint Norton McMullen LLP, Chartered Professional Accounts as auditor moved by Nesa Gulasekharam. Seconded by Michael Wong. Motion carried by vote with a show of hands.

9. PRESENTATION OF 2023-2024 BUDGET

Nesa Gulasekharam reviewed the financial budget for the year 2023-2024, explaining the projected cost recovery income and providing an overview of the capital items that need attention. He explained that capital items previously were expensed from the Operating Fund, however because of the number of large expenses, we had created a Capital Fund and budget. He gave an overview of the operating, property and restricted funds. Nesa responded to a few questions from the membership.

10. REPORT OF THE TELLERS

Both Elders (Les Miyata & Nesa Gulasekharam) were re-elected for another term. The vote for the resolution to have women serve on the Board of Elders was 64%, which is not a two third (2/3) majority vote, and therefore we will continue to keep the composition of the Board of Elders as male only. Winston Miller clarified that the resolution was defeated. Johnny Chan Kin reminded us to continue to do good with humility and unity. Muriel Mayer was appreciative that it was pointed out that both leadership models are rooted in Scripture because we get our beliefs from the Word of God and that we can be united because of what Scriptures say. Bosco Tung posed the question of what the next steps would be. Johnny Chan Kin reiterated that this process started a couple years ago with the Board and we now need to move forward and we will not be revisiting this topic.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

Raymond Wade asked whether there were long term plans for the unused land on the north end. Johnny Chan Kin answered that the thought process began for what would be needed to expand under the leadership of Pastor Kevin. Now, under Pastor Daniel, there have been some further thoughts and ideas. Al Davy commented that under Pastor Dave Petrescue, the church was built with expansion in mind and thoughts of constructing an elementary school and day care centre. Elaine Philip asked about the library getting smaller and expressed her desire for the children to continue to have books available. Johnny Chan Kin explained that the library had been dwindling in use but encouraged members to share their vision for the future of the church as we would want to be able to provide resources that will be used.

12. PRAYER

13. ADJOURNMENT

Johnny Chan Kin thanked everyone for coming and asked the members to go in prayer. Winston Miller closed in prayer. Johnny Chan Kin stated that the ballots will be held for a short period of time before being destroyed. The meeting was adjourned by the Chair, Johnny Chan Kin, at 2:20 pm.

A NOTE FROM OUR LEAD PASTOR

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth" - John 1:14

The above verse served as the cornerstone of our journey this past ministry year, as we explored the profound reality of Emmanuel—God with us. I am exceedingly grateful to our staff, elders, ministry leaders, and volunteers for the ways in which each one has served sacrificially, faithfully, and wholeheartedly for the Kingdom of God!

As I reflect on the past year, I am reminded of the journey we took together, particularly during our Discipleship series in October 2023. This series was a foundational shift in how we understand and live out our faith. **We outlined a clear pathway for discipleship, focusing on three key elements: be disciples, grow as disciples, and make disciples.** This discipleship pathway wasn't just a theoretical concept; it became a practical framework that we could all apply in our daily lives. We delved into what it truly means to be with Jesus, to cultivate a deep, intimate relationship with Him through prayer, worship, and the study of His Word. We then explored the transformative power of becoming like Jesus, allowing His character to shape and mold us into His likeness. Finally, we looked at doing what Jesus did—living out our faith in tangible ways by serving others, spreading the gospel, and being disciple-making disciples as apprentices of Jesus.

Following the Discipleship series, we entered a season of reflection and theological exploration with our Emmanuel series. We began by contemplating the truth of Emmanuel—God with us—who stepped into our world, took on human flesh, and lived among us. This concept is at the heart of our faith, reminding us that God is not distant or detached but is intimately involved in our lives. We then journeyed through the Old

Testament, tracing the presence of Emmanuel through the stories of God's people. We saw how God has always been with His people, guiding them through the wilderness, providing in times of need, and revealing His glory in the Tabernacle. We explored the significance of Emmanuel in the Tabernacle, where God's glory was revealed in the midst of His people. **The Tabernacle was more than just a physical structure; it was a symbol of God's desire to dwell among His people.**

One of the most tangible expressions of God's presence among us this year has been seen in the life-changing impact of our ministries. A particularly moving testimony is the story of a family who came to faith through the collective ministry of our church. It began with their son attending our summer camp, where he experienced the love and joy of Christ through the staff and activities. This initial connection led his parents to attend our community BBQ and Alpha Sunday. Their openness to explore faith further led them to sign up for the Alpha course. Over the weeks of Alpha and our Sports Club, both the son and the father encountered the gospel in a transformative way and made the decision to follow Christ. This family is now deeply integrated into our church community, participating in a Life Group and actively engaging in various ministries at UAC. Their journey from exploration to commitment is a powerful reminder that God is at work among us, drawing people to Himself through the love, hospitality, and witness of our church community. All of this happened because people sacrificially served. Our church community served at camp making it a welcoming and fun environment. The greeters, tech team, worship team, ushers, and our BBQ team served to make a hospitable and engaging environment for our Alpha Sunday which touched many lives. Many served to make Alpha possible by cooking, praying, hosting, leading, and

sharing invites with friends and family. Others served in Sports Club and Children's Ministry as we value families and enriching children with the gospel. It takes everyone engaged in the mission of God to fulfill the Great Commission and see people come to saving faith in Jesus. When we ran our U-Protect training, we were blessed with over 200 people who registered to be trained and prepared for our next ministry year! I'm deeply grateful for all our leaders and volunteers!

This year also marked a significant milestone in the life of our church as we celebrated 30 years of ministry through the Masters Pantry and Hampers of Hope. These ministries have been lifelines for countless families in our community, providing not only physical nourishment but also the love and hope of Christ. The longevity and impact of these ministries are a testament to the faithfulness of our volunteers, the generosity of our congregation, and the inspiring leadership of Nancy Wilson. We are deeply grateful for everyone who has contributed to these ministries, whether through donating food, volunteering their time, or offering financial support.

In addition to this, we celebrated our 75th Anniversary as a church—a momentous occasion that gave us the opportunity to reflect on the incredible journey God has led us on.

Over the past 75 years, Unionville Alliance Church has touched thousands of lives, both locally and globally.

From our humble beginnings in a small gathering to the thriving community we are today, God's faithfulness has been seen!

I've been particularly blessed by the number of seekers that have been visiting and attending our church as they begin a spiritual journey of faith. I'm reminded of one particular Sunday when a young man from a different faith background asked me, "What are some of the first steps that I can take towards Jesus?" After speaking with him,

I saw a young woman seated in the pews after most people around her had left. At that point in her journey, she was a spiritualist and seeker. I was able to speak with her and continue to point her in the direction of Jesus. Before I left the sanctuary, I looked at my phone and saw an email from a visitor who asked, "Daniel, can you give me some more context about the tabernacle as I had to look up what that word meant." These are just a few examples of the many who are seeking and searching for meaning, purpose, and abundance of life in Jesus.

I want to express my deep appreciation to each of you who have served so faithfully in various capacities. Whether through our food bank, life groups, worship services, children's ministry, youth and young adult events or outreach opportunities, your contributions have made a difference in countless lives. The work we do together is not just about programs or events; it's about being the hands and feet of Jesus, touching our world through His love and grace, one life at a time.

As we move forward into the next year, we will continue to focus on being a Christ-centered, Spirit-empowered, and mission-focused community. **The task before us is enormous, but we are confident that as we keep our eyes on Jesus, the best is yet to come.** We will continue to pursue our vision and God-given mandate of being disciples, growing as disciples, and making disciples. Thank you for your ongoing support, your sacrificial service, and your unwavering commitment to the mission of Unionville Alliance Church. May God bless you richly as we continue to serve Him and touch our world through Jesus, one life at a time. Together, we will see His Kingdom come and His will be done, here in Unionville and beyond.



Pastor Daniel Mills

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daniel Mills".

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STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSES

FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

	BUDGET 2025	ACTUAL 2024	ACTUAL 2023
INCOME			
CONTRIBUTIONS - Operating Fund	\$845,000	\$927,202	\$878,145
CONTRIBUTIONS - Missions	\$96,000	\$101,504	\$88,163
CONTRIBUTIONS - Memorial Fund	-	\$100	\$100
CONTRIBUTIONS - Community Care Fund	\$75,000	\$74,488	\$66,660
PROGRAMMING - Cost Recovery	\$61,206	\$116,011	\$65,728
OTHER INCOME	\$15,000	\$24,714	\$33,655
INTEREST	\$18,000	\$25,736	\$18,086
GOVERNMENT GRANT	-	\$36,700	\$10,000
CAPITAL PROJECT FUND	\$325,000	\$30,066	\$17,523
TOTAL INCOME	\$1,435,206	\$1,336,521	\$1,178,060
EXPENSES			
SALARIES and BENEFITS	\$532,034	\$490,502	\$ 417,111
PROGRAMMING COSTS	\$257,055	\$190,543	\$ 137,894
OFFICE and ADMINISTRATION	\$59,850	\$80,695	\$ 75,491
FACILITIES	\$117,400	\$122,490	\$ 131,274
C&MA DENOMINATIONAL COMMITMENTS	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$ 12,000
MISSION	\$109,400	\$104,956	\$ 110,593
COMMUNITY CARE	\$93,000	\$100,204	\$ 60,652
MEMORIAL FUND	-	\$3,000	-
AMORTIZATION	\$125,000	\$127,949	\$ 112,711
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,305,739	\$1,232,339	\$1,057,726
NET INCOME (DEFICIT)	\$129,467	\$ 104,182	\$120,334
ADDITION OF CAPITAL 2024-25 Front of House Audio - \$300k; Other - \$25k	\$325,000	\$144,644	\$241,992

Our Vision & Values

Touching our world through Jesus, one life at a time.



Sharing God's Message of Hope

Our world is severely broken because of our sin and rejection of God, but the hope of the world is Jesus. God's plan is to reconcile a lost and alienated humanity through Jesus' death and resurrection. Jesus tasked us with representing him and sharing his life-transforming message with everyone. As a church, we are committed to helping people to know him and to become passionate followers.



Meaningful Community

We were never meant to live in isolation. God created us to be in relationship with other people. We understand that spiritual growth requires journeying together with others in faith. This involves caring for and helping each other, praying for and encouraging one another, holding each other accountable and serving. One way we facilitate this is through Life Groups where people gather together regularly to strengthen each other and grow together in their faith.



Biblical Teaching

We believe that life transformation happens through the Spirit-filled communication of the Bible. We are committed to preaching and teaching the Word of God with integrity, without compromise and in a way that speaks to the relevant issues of our time with love and compassion. The Bible is central to all we do at Unionville Alliance Church.



Caring for Those in Need

Jesus identified love of neighbour as a guiding priority for every believer. Our faith is not to be restricted internally but to reflect the care and mercy of God to the poor, hurting and disenfranchised. We will reach out with compassion and practical assistance to those of our community who require help as an expression of faith with works, bringing hope to the hurting.



Prayer

We are cognizant of our inability to effectively live for Christ and to serve him fruitfully in our own strength. We are reminded that without Jesus we can do nothing. Because of this, we are committed to pray fervently for God's guidance, direction, wisdom and empowerment. We humbly acknowledge our deep need and will bathe the life and ministry of our church in concerted prayer.

STORIES OF LIVING ON MISSION

Missions Committee:

John Cook, Rhys Foy, Anna Goh, Laura Mills

LOVING OUR NEIGHBOURS

During His time on earth, Jesus made it clear that we are to love the Lord and love our neighbour, and by doing these two things, all the other commandments are fulfilled. He sums it up:

"You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'" - Matthew 22:37-38 (NLT)

Members at UAC strive to live out this command through a wide variety of mission opportunities: serving our community, providing financial support, and most importantly, through prayer. Over the past year, a number of **mission organizations, missionaries, and local outreach initiatives** that UAC has sent, supported, or partnered with have been highlighted.

"One such way we live out this love is by supporting families serving on mission fields around the world. For example, how do you support and love a family halfway across the world, learning the local language, and working among displaced and hurting people in the Middle East? One simple idea was to remember their birthdays and let them know that **they are loved and known by us here**. That's exactly what was done this year!

We created a **short video from the Power Up class** for their children, E and J, whose birthdays are less than a week apart. The idea came up on Monday, and on Tuesday, Pastor Allison graciously allowed me to take over her class for a few minutes. From Wednesday to Saturday, I was reminded of how much I don't enjoy public speaking, especially when trying to make it fun and exciting for children. On Sunday, we filmed that birthday video and sent it off on Monday. The family was touched by our gesture, feeling cherished from afar. We continue to let them know they are loved as a family."
-Rhys Foy

THE GLOBAL IMPACT OF THE ALLIANCE WORLD FELLOWSHIP (AWF)

-John Cook

"I heard it, did you?"

It was Sunday, July 7th at UAC when we had the privilege to hear from **Raul and Donna Santos**, who serve as the International Strategy Directors for Church Mobilization & Development with The Alliance Canada. Donna spoke passionately about the **Alliance World Fellowship (AWF)**—the global body of our denomination—sharing incredible statistics about its worldwide reach: **22,000 churches, 6.2 million members in 88 countries.**

What I heard was the low murmur in the audience, **"Wait, what?"** rippling through the sanctuary. Many of us were excited and curious to learn that The Alliance is working in places where we have personal connections around the world.



The light bulb moment was:

*"The Alliance has churches in _____?
That's where my _____ lives!"*

My dad, Arnold Cook, who was also part of our UAC family and served as the former President of The Alliance Canada, used to say that **"AWF is our denomination's best-kept-secret."** Not many in our churches know the full extent of AWF's impact, whose purpose and passion is to proclaim the name of Jesus Christ to all nations.

Together, we spread the light of the gospel from the nations, to the nations, even to the farthest corners of the earth.

It was a great reminder that while we at UAC are the Body of Christ here, we are also part of a much larger global Body that is transforming our world for Christ, one life at a time."

PRAYING FOR REVIVAL *-Daniel Mills*

Prayer is at the center of any spiritual awakening, and it was at the heart of a revival that took place in Cuba, led by one of our own International Workers. For a number of years, the Lord moved upon this worker to champion prayer and seek revival among the Cuban Alliance. This sparked a movement of prayer within our Alliance churches and extended beyond denominational boundaries to reach many other churches.

Hundreds of pastors gathered for prayer, which had a tremendous impact not only on our churches in Cuba but throughout the entire island. It was also the catalyst for significant spiritual growth, **resulting in 70 churches and 18 church plants** within less than 30 years in the Alliance.

UAC was able to partner with our brothers and sisters in Cuba in several ways. Through the generosity of donors, we sent funds to purchase land for a growing and thriving church that had reached 150 members in just three years. As the Lord continued to draw people, the need for expansion became clear.

Since many pastors in Cuba are bi-vocational, we were also able to help by purchasing a water pump, which allowed them to sell water to families and communities. The income generated from this project was distributed to support pastors in need.



Moreover, UAC helped support **Rafael and Yudelkis, the first-ever International Workers sent from the Cuban Alliance.**

They have now arrived in

Bolivia as part of the Amazon LRP Project, where they will work among least-reached indigenous groups, including the Tacana, Cavini, and Cuyubabas peoples. In addition to outreach, they will also help develop a missionary leadership training centre to equip and reach Amazon people groups for further ministry.

Not only is God doing amazing things in Cuba, but that zeal is spreading to other countries, reaching the lost for Jesus!

RELEASING CHILDREN FROM POVERTY, IN JESUS NAME *-Anna Goh*

On April 14th, **Compassion Canada** came to UAC and shared how they work with frontline churches to connect children in poverty with sponsors. These local churches, embedded in their communities, are equipped through sponsorship to provide **holistic care**—spiritual, physical, social, and economic—for the children they serve and protect. Sponsors become part of the care team, supporting the church's efforts to meet the needs of children, from newborns until they're between 18-22. Local Compassion staff ensure that all resources are used transparently and effectively, fostering meaningful, long-term connections.

That Sunday, UAC responded with overwhelming compassion, with **60 children sponsored!** Our family was among those moved to action. After prayerful consideration, we decided to sponsor a **1-year-old boy from the Philippines named Matmat.** Thanks to Compassion and the church, he receives proper nutrition, healthcare, and education, along with support for his mother on how to care for him. In the future, this support will extend also to his schooling.

We received a handwritten letter from Matmat's mom, sharing his favourite foods and her hopes and prayers for his future. **We love receiving these updates!** We were also able to write back to him and his family. My family and I are incredibly grateful for the opportunity to show Christ's love by supporting Matmat.

MISSIONS SUNDAYS

Jul 23 *International Justice Mission:* **Joash Thomas**

Sep 03 *Missional Vision of UAC:* **Daniel Mills**

Oct 29 *IWs in Thailand:* **Derek & Bonnie Burnett**

Jan 28 *IWs in Central Asia:* **Wade & Cara**

Apr 14 *Compassion Canada:* **Aimee & Alyssa Esparaz**

May 26 *IWs in Thailand:* **Derek & Zee Chan**

PARTNERING TO BUILD A SAFER, MORE JUST WORLD -IJM Freedom Partner

“Last summer, we were introduced to **International Justice Mission (IJM)** and their global work to combat modern-day slavery and human trafficking. It was eye-opening to hear stories of both oppression and freedom. Knowing that **more people are in slavery today than ever before in history**, we felt called to join IJM's vision to rescue millions and make justice for the poor unstoppable, one life at a time.

Inspired by Jesus, who came to set us free, our family became **Freedom Partners** with IJM Canada, as we also wanted to join in the work of bringing liberty to all. As the body of Christ, we have a role to play. We continue to be moved and touched by the stories of people being liberated through the good work of IJM.”

Missions Fund:

\$40,000	Global Advance Fund
\$15,000	New Ventures
\$10,000	Toronto Alliance Church
\$6,680	The Jaffray Project
\$6,216	Cuba
\$5,334	The Burnetts (Thailand)
\$5,000	First Cuban IWs to Bolivia
\$5,000	For Freedom International
\$5,000	IW Family in the Middle East
\$2,400	Wycliffe Bible Translators
\$1,000	Katzaire Zee (Japan)
\$1,000	Afghan Church of the GTA
\$500	International Justice Mission
\$500	Compassion Canada
\$500	Messianic Mandate
\$500	Samaritan's Purse (OCC)
\$300	Ukraine Relief

\$104,930

Note: RISE Support Centre has been moved to the Community Care Fund starting this fiscal year.

A JOURNEY INTO MISSIONAL LIVING

This past year, we launched a **Missions Cohort** to help participants grow in missional living through teaching, engaging in missions, and building community. The cohort fosters a global vision for missions, encouraging participants to live missionally, pray globally, and serve both locally and internationally. This **multi-generational, multi-ethnic group** meets once a month to focus on learning, discussion, and prayer.

Below is a reflection from one *cohort member*:
“Through the Missions Cohort, I learned about the calling and missions journey of Derek Burnett, which was very inspiring—a living testimony of how faithful God is. It was impactful to hear how **God called Derek** and was faithful in his journey even though he encountered challenges. **God was always there making things possible and enabling him**. Derek's experience gave me a great example and challenged me to see if I will be obedient to God's calling one day. **If He calls me or my children to missions, am I ready to be obedient?** I took this testimony to heart.

The detailed sharing of Derek's journey went back to when he was in high school when he felt called to missions. He was preparing to go to law school, **but God seemed to be calling him toward missions**; however, his parents weren't ready to release him at that time. **He shared very honestly about the journey**, and it was amazing to hear.

I reflected on how I would respond if my oldest son finished his degree and told me about a calling to missions. I put myself in that position—**if one day God asked us to pack up our things and go, even with young kids, would I be ready?** That was a good challenge for me.

Derek's testimony enriched my understanding of how the Kingdom of God is expanding through His people and how God collaborates with His people, allowing us to respond and journey with Him.

I see this pattern repeating again and again, and my understanding of how God works through people is continuing to grow, which has been very helpful.”

A HOUSE OF PRAYER

Prayer Leadership Team:

Cheryl Roe, Donna Rawana, Salome Alagaratnam

This is our favourite quote regarding prayer, as it reminds us of the importance, value, and role of prayer in the church as well as in our own life:

“Prayer does not equip us for greater works —prayer is the greater work.”
- Oswald Chambers

The prayer ministry at UAC has continued to grow and evolve, as we strive to become a **'House of Prayer,'** undergirding everything we do with prayer. This is becoming more and more ingrained in the culture of our church. We are grateful to Pastor Daniel for leading us in this direction over the past few years, as each year **grows us more** in our journey of prayer!

This ministry year, some things have remained the same and some things have changed up a bit. **We consistently offered a Tuesday evening weekly Zoom prayer meeting, which was reasonably well attended.** We are so thankful for Matthew 18:20 – ***“For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”*** This verse always keeps us from feeling discouraged when a smaller group shows up to pray!

We've also continued with **prayer walks** through the summer months, alternating weeks between the UAC neighborhood and our own home neighborhoods or communities. Though attendance was lower than hoped, a faithful group of UACers remained committed. One such dedicated participant, Franklyn Pietersz, shared his reflections:

“My concern with prayer walks is that we are so few. I am sure that if it were not considered worthwhile, UAC would not have implemented such an event. Praying for others is a blessing. One of Pastor Daniel's visions is that we would be a praying church. Hence, how can I, as a loyal member of this prayer team, not participate when the church calls me to do something for His glory?”

The one-hour walk around the church community, praying on the subject that has been chosen, is so comforting, knowing that God hears our prayers. I find that most of the time the Spirit diverts us to pray outside of the prayer guide for the week as we pass schools, parks, and people out for a stroll. What we don't see is inside the homes we pass by. I see big, expensive homes, but is there peace, love, and joy inside? We need to pray more, to never give up, to pray without ceasing. This is something we can live out as we prayer walk our neighborhoods.”

Once again, we ran a **'40 Day Prayer Challenge'** to start off 2024. This was a truly communal effort. Staff and a wide swath of UACer's from all ages led each day. We learned a lot about different ways to pray such as the **'Prayer of Examen'** and **'Breath Prayers.'** We also prayed for UAC ministries and concerns around the world. **It was a wonderful way to start off the new year!**

As we grow corporately in prayer, we also sought to provide ways for people to grow individually in prayer. In October, we ran **'The Prayer Practice,'** a course focused on deepening our prayer lives. One key teaching from the course emphasized:

“Prayer is simply the medium through which we communicate and commune with God. The practice of prayer is learning to set aside dedicated time to intentionally be with God.”

Verna Proctor shared this about her experience during Session 4 – **'The Prayer Practice: Being with God':** *“...this resonated with me in a remarkable way, since meeting with God in the silence was a way of prayer I had never experienced or practiced. My prayer relationship with the Lord is full of words and chatter. I so aspired to be in contemplative prayer (based on 2 Corinthians 3:18), allowing all of myself to be fully open to my Father, bearing my soul, admiring and gazing upon Him in adoration,*

and fully enjoying His presence. Rather than seeking an audible voice, it was about quieting my heart and mind to be still and encounter His love, and to return my love to Him. Like all prayer, consistency is key to becoming comfortable and honest. This kind of silent prayer has offered me peace and healing deep within, the kind of healing only God can bring about as He transforms us into His glorious image."

In April, we ran 'The Lectio Course'. The ancient practice of Lectio Divina teaches us "how to hear God by praying the Bible." Wesley & Gladis Philip, who participated in the course, shared their experience: "We had been using the Lectio App and enjoyed that, so we wanted to learn more about Lectio Divina. We also hoped to have more meaningful quiet times with the Lord. We were reminded of the importance of taking time to read and meditate on God's word instead of rushing it. It's easy to think that we need to read a lot of verses, but by reading a few verses slowly and prayerfully, and listening for what God is saying, it was encouraging to hear what God was speaking to us.

The steps of Lectio Divina were also helpful to progress from reading to meditating on God's word. Meditating on God's word has allowed us to gain more insight into what God wants to speak to us each day. Since Lectio requires multiple steps, it's also a reminder that we should not rush our quiet times, but give God time to speak. Praying about what has stood out to us from what we've read has made our quiet times more meaningful as we respond to what God has spoken and ask for His help to apply it to our lives."

Finally, for the month of June, we added 'The Solitude Practice' as a 4-week online session. This was indeed something new for many of us.

"Solitude is not a private, therapeutic place... it is the place of encounter." - Henri Nouwen

Here is how Amanda Menezes felt having learned about the practice of silence and solitude in her relationship with the Lord:

"Solitude empowers us to be present solely with God. Removing ourselves from distractions like technology can clear our minds of distracting thoughts and retrain our brains to have longer attention spans.

I realized after watching all the videos, solitude is where God most effectively reveals what truly exists within your heart, soul and spirit – the things that should exist there and the things He wants to deal with you. The course also taught us how to silence and sharpen our intuition with God - the quieter you become, the more you are able to hear His voice.

Spending more time alone was linked with increased feelings of reduced stress for calming effects. The course provided numerous biblical examples from the life of Jesus. What amazed me most was how Jesus withdrew alone to speak to his Father in prayer. This was found in numerous places in Scripture bringing me even deeper within the Word of God.

Finally, practicing solitude with God brings a sense of rest and refreshment that is hard to find elsewhere. It's a pause in our all-too-busy lives, a break in our constant working life, allowing us to simply be ourselves with our Savior. This rest is not just physical but deeply mental, emotional, and spiritual."

God is indeed working both corporately and individually to grow us in prayer as a church, as His people. We continued within this ministry year to offer 'After Service Prayer' and 'Before Service Prayer'. We had prayer teams for Summer Camps and both Alpha sessions (fall and winter). All done as we seek to undergird all we do in prayer.

"Prayer is essential. Prayer is the ministry."

It has been a privilege and a great learning experience to serve on the **Prayer Leadership Team (PTL)**. We are looking forward to this upcoming year of prayer ministry. **May God be glorified in all we do, and may our enabling come from Him, always.**

IMPACT AND GROWTH OF **ALPHA**

Pastor Leonor Lopes

Alpha continues to play a vital role in our outreach and spiritual growth efforts. This internationally recognized program is a tool that introduces individuals to the basics of the Christian faith through a series of sessions that include a meal, a talk, and open discussion. Alpha offers a welcoming, non-judgmental environment where participants can explore life's big questions and the core aspects of Christianity.

FALL TERM HIGHLIGHTS

During the fall term, we had the pleasure of welcoming **17 guests** from various faith backgrounds, including those with no faith at all, to our **in-person** Alpha sessions. These guests ranged in age from youth to seniors. **Six group hosts and helpers** facilitated weekly discussions, creating a space for deep conversations and the formation of strong bonds. This term was particularly fruitful:

- **Two people committed their lives to Christ.**
- **One individual experienced a profound touch by the Holy Spirit.**
- **Another guest rekindled their faith in Christ.**

We thank God for these blessings. Our gratitude extends to **Cheryl Roe and the prayer team**, who supported this initiative through constant prayer both individually and on-site. Additionally, **Barb Doner and the hospitality team** played a vital role by faithfully planning, preparing, and serving meals.

WINTER TERM INNOVATIONS

In the winter term, we transitioned to an online format and took a bold step by **leading English and Mandarin Chinese Alpha sessions** concurrently.

Participants were also encouraged to invite guests to their homes to join the sessions together. Despite some challenges on Zoom, **we had 22 participants with four hosts and helpers on the English side and 17 participants with two hosts on the Mandarin side.**

Special thanks go to **Winnie Wang** and **Yangyi Pan**, who co-hosted the Mandarin Alpha, and **Bosco Tung** who provided technical support. We were particularly inspired by one guest who, after attending the fall session, returned for the winter Alpha and brought a friend along. This online Alpha concluded with an in-person meal where **two individuals shared their testimonies** of putting their faith in Christ through the sessions. **Remarkably, three baptisms also came out of this Winter Alpha term**, marking a significant moment of transformation in the lives of these participants.



We are deeply grateful to our wonderful and mighty God, who continues to use Alpha to draw people to Himself.

LOOKING AHEAD

Through Alpha, we witness God's transformative power at work in our community and eagerly anticipate even more lives being impacted in the future, particularly as we introduce childcare support in our upcoming Fall Alpha program.

As we are called to be disciple-making disciples, who could you **prayerfully invite to attend an Alpha course?** As we seek to fulfill the Great Commission and see people come to saving grace in Jesus, we all have a role to play and no one can watch from the sidelines. Let us share what Jesus has done for us and be ambassadors of Christ's love to our friends, family, and neighbours!

MORE THAN JUST FOOD MASTER'S PANTRY AND HAMPERS OF HOPE

Master's Pantry Director:
Nancy Wilson

Master's Pantry continues to be a thriving and important ministry at UAC. Although our focus is to provide non-perishable food, produce, and milk to those in need, the ministry is much more than that. **Master's Pantry touches people's lives for Christ, one life at a time.** As the volunteers and I get to know individuals who come on a monthly basis, we have many opportunities to minister to them. It is a privilege to connect with each person, to listen, share, and pray with them. In this society, many people feel alone and are looking for a safe place and safe people where they can share, feel cared for, and experience love. **Master's Pantry provides that for them.**

Since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, **Master's Pantry** has continued to operate as a drive-through twice a month. All the boxes and bags of produce are packed ahead of time on Thursday mornings by a wonderful team of volunteers. On Saturdays, people come in their cars and line up. They are registered, and then the volunteers load their food into their cars. We also continue to do deliveries to a group of people who cannot come to the Pantry in person due to disabilities or children with special needs. Currently, we are serving between **120 and 150 families each month**, with an **average of over 300 people served per month.**

This past Fall, we were able to introduce a **coffee time with light snacks inside the church building.** After people receive their food, they are invited to come in for coffee and snacks, visiting with the volunteers and other clients. This has proven to be a very important and special time for the clients, who eagerly ask, *"Is there coffee today?"* Thank you to **Jane Griffith**, who is in the room to greet the clients and make sure they get coffee. During this time, there are opportunities to talk to people, listen to them, and often pray with them.

A lady who recently started using the pantry responded when I asked if I could pray with her, she exclaimed: ***"Nobody has ever done that with me before!"***

This past December, we **celebrated our 30th year of doing Hampers of Hope.** We had the privilege of providing a Christmas Hamper and gift cards to **220 families.** It is always such a blessing to see how happy people are, many with tears in their eyes as they receive a hamper. Once again, it is not only the provision of food but the personal touch as we greet people when they come through. This is always such a big project, and we could not do it without the help of many volunteers who come throughout the week to set up, pack, distribute, and deliver the hampers.

Once again, Russell Foy did an amazing job contacting corporate sponsors, which is such an important part of the Hamper project. Russell and I had the privilege of attending some corporate events to receive cheques and gift cards. A special thanks goes to Brad Fletcher, Wayne Nishimura, and Hockey with Heart, who continue to support us in such a big way. This year, they provided products, produce, and turkeys and chickens for the hampers. Some of the hockey players also delivered hampers.



A huge thank you to **Don Roe**, who heads up the **Unionville Youth Council**, a group of grade 7-12 students who consistently support Master's Pantry twice a month, coming on Saturdays to serve clients and pack boxes. Without these youth and our many volunteers, Master's Pantry could not continue to run.

MORE THAN JUST FOOD MASTER'S PANTRY AND HAMPERS OF HOPE *(cont.)*

Through the help of **Kris Wong and Bosco Tung**, this past Fall-Winter we received an Ontario Trillium Foundation grant, which allowed us to purchase an industrial-size freezer and refrigerator. Thank you to **Tony Miles and his Facilities team**, who upgraded the electrical and installed it for us. This is such a blessing as we are now able to keep and distribute more **fresh produce and frozen items** for each pantry.



Group Photo from OTF Recognition Ceremony for Freezer and Fridge

As part of the **York Region Food Bank Association**, Master's Pantry continues to receive deliveries twice a month before each Foodbank. These items include non-perishable goods as well as produce, meat, and at times eggs and milk. We also have shoppers who shop for us twice a month and deliver the items to the church, ready for packing.

We are also benefiting again this year from the yield of produce that comes from the **Urban Farm Initiative (UFI) Community Garden** partnership on the North Field of the church. In August, Master's Pantry received **50 kilograms of produce**, including tomatoes, green peppers, hot peppers, and kale, among other items. This is such a wonderful addition to what we give the clients.

God is using the ministry of Master's Pantry to reach people's lives for Christ. A new client who recently came to Master's Pantry was very overwhelmed with the love of the volunteers. She said, *"It took a lot for me to finally come here for help, but you people make this so easy. I cannot believe the love and care everyone has shown me."*



One of our shoppers was loading items into his car when a lady approached him and asked what he was doing. He explained what Master's Pantry food bank was. She told him that she needed help—her husband had recently passed away, and she was without a job. I was able to connect with her, and she has been coming to Master's Pantry. I have also been able to help her in other ways, pray with her, and minister to her. She has said what a blessing Master's Pantry is to her and what it means just to have someone to talk to who cares and offers prayer.

People are in need not just physically but spiritually and emotionally, and through Master's Pantry, we can minister to those needs. **It is such an awesome privilege to be part of people's lives and share the love of Christ with them.**



IMPROVING OUR FACILITIES

Facilities Committee:
Tony Miles, Jason
Alvares, Terry Doner,
Don Griffin, Denis Lopes

The **Facilities Committee** is responsible for overseeing the upgrading of Unionville Alliance Church facilities and assisting the Director of Operations, in the ongoing maintenance of the Church. Our role is to create a positive first impression for anyone entering Unionville Alliance Church.

We wish to thank our custodian for his ongoing work in keeping the facilities in the best condition.

A big thank you also goes out to all the volunteers who helped with the following projects:

Accessibility & Safety

- Installed an electronic door access system to the external and internal office doors
- Installed 2 additional security cameras
- Replaced the lower-level water fountain with a refrigerated water station that includes a bottle filling option
- Replaced the electrical supply to the front parking lot lights and the electronic sign
- Preparing for the future installation of an elevator, pending available funding

Major Building Repairs

- Replaced the shingles on the church west roof
- Repaired deteriorating brickwork

Facilities Improvements

- Reinstalled the wooden cross in the Auditorium
- Upgraded the electrical system for Masters Pantry to support the new commercial freezer and refrigerator
- Added additional heating and ventilation in Masters Pantry
- Installed a surplus screen from the Auditorium into the Fellowship Hall
- Repaired and upgraded the water supply for the Baptismal Tank
- Made several electrical safety improvements throughout the Church

CONNECTING SENIORS OLDER ADULTS STILL IN SERVICE

Pastor Leonor
Lopes

Older Adults Still in Service (OASIS) is a ministry where seniors organize opportunities to connect with each other. The 2023-2024 year has been full of engaging activities, including:

- Board games
- Workshop on finishing our lives well
- Christmas banquet with entertainment and gifts
- Tax tips workshop led by Elrah Robinson
- Practical help with electronic devices
- Protecting ourselves from fraud presentation
- Discussion on fears of aging along with fun brain teasers and entertainment, led by Patricia Wade
- Bus trip to Muskoka with a steamboat tour

We are grateful to all who stepped up to lead!

Comments from participants:

"The fraud prevention workshop was great, and I really enjoyed the information seminars. The Christmas event was wonderful too. Thanks for your efforts on our behalf." – Elaine Jackson

"As newcomers at UAC, the boat tour was a highlight for us this year. We're excited to get involved in more OASIS events in 2025 and look forward to making even more great memories!" – Joanna & Mike Barthmann

"Our big THANK-YOU to OASIS, a friendly and welcoming group to us 😊❤️"

"Our favorite memory was the Christmas gathering. It was very well planned and attended. The meal was great, and it was wonderful catching up with others. Thanks for all your planning!" - Carol Mills



FEEDING HEARTS BUILDING COMMUNITY

Hospitality Director:
Barb Doner

Food Policy Team:
Barb Doner, Jasmine
Robert, Nancy Wilson

Gifts Team Leaders:
Joni Miyata, Verna
Proctor, Judy Smith,
Barb Doner

The **Hospitality Ministry** supports many ministries at UAC by providing gifts, notes, food, and drink. Working behind the scenes, our team helps create spaces where people feel **connected, loved, and part of our Christian community**. In this way, we are a vital link in touching the world for Jesus Christ, one life at a time.

A PLACE OF GATHERING AND SERVING

This year, the servery (kitchen) has become a well-organized hub of activity. One long-time volunteer reflected, **"I recall in days gone by it would have been difficult to find a spatula in our servery. But now we have a space that truly does the impossible. Not only is every drawer orderly and labeled, but all dishes are sanitized, while serving delicious meals!"** These improvements allow us to serve the diverse community more efficiently. We are grateful for the many hands that make this ministry possible.

SUPPORTING MINISTRIES THROUGH FOOD

Food continues to be a key part of connecting people in meaningful ways. **From serving meals at Alpha to organizing the feast for our 75th Anniversary Service in April, which served nearly 600 people**, a simple meal can go a long way in helping newcomers feel at home and grow their faith. These moments, centered around food, strengthen connections and have helped lead several individuals to faith in Jesus.



Barb, Diana, Joni & Nashwa holding 'food crafts' to eat that summer campers assembled (but they also baked for the children to gobble up 😊)

Ashook, Divya, and Audra cleaning up after morning coffee



THROUGH COFFEE AND FELLOWSHIP

The Coffee Ministry continues to foster community every Sunday after the service.

"It's more than just a cup of coffee; it's a moment for people to stop and connect on a deeper level," one volunteer shared.

These simple moments of fellowship over coffee and meals create opportunities for people to build relationships within the church family, making Sunday mornings even more impactful.

VOLUNTEERS BEHIND THE SCENES

The Hospitality Ministry wouldn't be possible without the dedication of our volunteers. As one volunteer noted, **"There are many people who sacrificially buy food or prepare food in the comfort of their homes and donate it to church functions, loving without fanfare."** Additionally, one team member who completed UAC's food handling courses was able to gain skills that led to a much-needed job at a community restaurant, highlighting the practical impact of the ministry.

LOOKING FORWARD

We are deeply thankful for everyone who has served in this ministry over the past year. Just as food and drink were central to gatherings in the Bible, they continue to foster community and connection at UAC. As we look forward, we remain committed to serving in ways that honor God and bring people closer together.

Do you ever wonder about the seeds that you sow? Not pumpkin seeds or pepper seeds, but spiritual seeds. In ministry, we are constantly sowing seeds in faith—praying they land on good soil and produce good fruit. Often, when one sows seeds, it takes time to reap the harvest and see the fruit. But when God provides sprouts and saplings, we get to see a glimpse of the transformative and deep work God is doing in hearts. And in those moments, you take a breath in and out and say, **"God, you're so good."** Our leaders this past year in **Power Up!** have faithfully continued to sow and plant seeds, trusting that God would bring the increase.

On Wednesday evenings, we ran Sports Club, and one of our leaders, Titus, recounted that his "experience at Sports Club had been nothing but joy. On the first day of Sports Club, God provided an opportunity to reach out to children who did not come from a Christian background. There was one child who attended on the first day about to leave the Sports Club session crying and having a rough day. The other leaders and I prayed for him."
Seeds were sown.

"We slowly saw a change in the child's attitude and watched him enter into a relationship with Jesus, growing in his love for God! This child was not the only one whose life had been changed for the better; I witnessed other kids who came from non-Christian backgrounds grow in their curiosity about the Bible and some even accepted Jesus as their personal Lord and Saviour." **God, you're so good!**

It's a pleasure to journey with the children and witness their growth! One child, who joined us three years ago for camp, has continued to connect with us through our mid-week programming and we have continued to pray for him and plant seeds:

Church was fun and help me believe in god and god has help me in life and help me learn in the old time of what happened and how god save us from dieing on the cross

His family is not Christian but even they recognize the change in him as he has made a decision to follow Jesus. In our times of Bible discussion, he makes good connections to different Bible stories we have discussed and is able to piece things together. The Holy Spirit has transformed his heart and is helping him in his actions to show the love of Jesus to those around Him. Even so, he invited a few other friends to join us for Sports Club and for camps! God is using this child to be a disciple-making disciple and sow and plant seeds as well!
God, you're so good!

Another child, who was invited by his neighbours to come to church, joined us for our last session of Sports Club:

Hello my name is Adam, I was first introduced to UAC by my neighbours, Bernice, Daniel, Lucas and Madeline Yam. Ever since we have been attending church frequently. I also participated in the Spring Sports led by Alison, Kyle, Nathan, Sheryl, Jason and Titus. I learned so much because every week was dedicated to a different type of sports. This summer I'm registered in three different power up summer camps. During Himalayan Expedition I learned about the teachings of Jesus. This week, I'm learning from a group of professional coaches various sports techniques. I'm also looking forward to the STEM camp in August.

The neighbours sowed seeds, and so did we, and Adam made a decision to follow Jesus during our Power Up! Camps 2024. **God, you're so good!**

In addition to our Wednesday evenings, we gather together on Sunday mornings for our Power Up! Children's Service where, as one child described, we "learn different stories about how Jesus helped people...play fun games that are related to the Bible...and listen to people that talk about how Jesus helped their life."

One of the girls who joins us has been coming to UAC since she was young and this past year, she has grown a lot in her faith, asking many questions. It's evident that the Holy Spirit is at work in her heart! The seeds sown at a young age are bearing fruit as she says:

"Going to church has made a huge difference in my life because I've made a closer connection with the Lord."

God, you're so good!

This child's family is part of the **Unionville Mandarin Alliance Church (UMAC)** community. One of the members on our children's discipleship team, Verna, writes: **"UAC is blessed by God in that our Sunday service runs simultaneously with UMAC, allowing the children and youth from both churches to worship together.** It has been wonderful watching the children move on up to Youth & Young Adults, growing in God's word and desiring to serve and being engaged as they grow in faith." **God, you're so good!**

God is also working in the lives of our leaders and parents! "Sports Club has helped me personally as well. I never thought I could become a leader, but slowly taking the lead has given me the confidence to seek leadership roles in my personal life. This has strengthened my relationship with God as I trust Him more in my leadership journey."

God, you're so good!

So, as I reflect on the seeds sown this past ministry year, I am thankful for our Power Up! leaders who have served faithfully, planting seeds in the next generation. I am thankful for the way God is moving in the lives of the children and families!

GOD'S WORK AT SUMMER CAMPS

Coming to UAC has impacted my life a lot, when it was my first time coming here, I was really nervous and anxious about camp, but then I met a lot of amazing leaders and it made me feel good because normally I am really shy, but with a lot of encouragement, I started to open up more and I had so much fun. Whenever I come to UAC I would have such an amazing experience and me following Jesus made me realize how much Jesus loved me.



"Our children, Aiden and Maya, have been attending kids camp at UAC for many years! We're so proud of our son Aiden, who was a volunteer last summer and chose to attend the leadership camp this year before volunteering at the STEMcation camp. He's excited to come back and volunteer again. Aiden and Maya ended their week by going to the youth social on Friday afternoon, and our daughter was very involved in memorizing verses. She was sad to see the camp end. Their week was fun-filled and edifying. Thank you to Pastor Allison and all the team members. We look forward to seeing you next summer or sooner!"

- Parents of Campers, 2024
 (Mike and Audrey Chin)

How God impacted my life was when I was signed up for UAC camps at first I didn't wanna go because none of my friends were going. But when I got there I was amazed that everyone was so nice and encouraging and all the leaders were so nice but I was more amazed when I got to bible study station at first I had no idea what they were talking about or what the bible even was but I got with a leader and learned more about Jesus. After the camp was over I got a chance to ask my mom if I can believe in Jesus and start going to church she and my Dad was overjoyed. Since then, me and my family have been coming to church every Sunday and learning God's word that is how God impacted my life.

Grace Wu

"It was my pleasure to serve our community (and ultimately God's kingdom) by working on our summer missions team back in 2023! Camps are so much fun and are so impactful in the lives of the children who attend. I think that's the reason why there are so many trials at camp. Satan knows that we're doing a great work for God and wants to do everything he can to make the process as bumpy as possible. But God's goodness is greater than the Devil's evil, and we ended up having a splendid year of camps!

While I regretfully can't share many stories about how we impacted the campers last year (since I was working behind the scenes), I am very pleased to talk about how God grew our youth ministry through the many people who volunteered for camps. We had so many youth inviting their friends to come volunteer, and other youth from the community just stopping by to collect their volunteer hours. Many of these youth bonded with our own Plugged-In youth and ended up becoming 'usual faces' on Wednesday evenings. It's super encouraging to see that God doesn't just work in the lives of the kids who come to camp, but in the teens as well!

Even the youth who didn't stick around after the summer were touched by God, I'm sure. One youth, in particular, impressed me because despite her family's Hindu religion, she went out of her way to lead the music actions for the campers for several weeks—even coming in on extra days just to practice. This kind of experience is undoubtedly the kind of memory that will stay with her for a long time and remind her of the goodness of God during uncertain times in the future.

Let's all keep on praying for the youth who volunteered in 2023, and for the youth who volunteered this year in 2024. Let's pray that these memories of seeing God work in the children will become a conduit for God to work in the lives of the youth!"

Jadon Smith
Camp Director 2023



God has certainly been moving this past ministry year. It has been such a privilege to walk with our youth at UAC and see the fruit of God's work in their hearts as He pours out His love into their lives.

With a focus on Christian identity and what it truly means to be a child of God, our youth participated in various learning experiences focused on exploring the life-changing impact Jesus can have when they commit everything to being His disciple.



From traversing through the neighbourhood going door-to-door collecting non-perishable foods for our Master's Pantry, serving alongside the **Operation Christmas Child (OCC)** ministry in making and collecting shoeboxes, to our first joint youth retreat partnering with **Markham Chinese Alliance Church (MCAC)** and joining their peers in a week-long **Youth Leadership Camp**, it has been amazing to see how God is shaping them into the people He created them to be.

I've experienced the joy of witnessing new friendships being born, existing friendships strengthened, and perhaps most heartwarming of all, the boldness in many of the youths' declarations that they are indeed followers of Christ. With the support of an outstanding leadership team, I look forward to this coming ministry year, where we will be challenging our youth to live intentionally for Jesus.

ELISABETH'S STORY

"I will never forget the first time that I attended youth at Unionville Alliance Church in September 2023. Earlier that day, I had left my new school early after second period, feeling overwhelmingly alone. At this time I did not attend the church, but I had volunteered at a few summer camps and remembered one of my co-counsellors mentioning

youth night on Wednesdays. I was nervous to come because I barely knew anybody there, but I wanted to get out of the house and do something productive. I remember leaving the youth room so much happier, incredibly moved by the church's welcoming and inclusive nature.

Since that day, Unionville Alliance Church has become an integral part of my life. I have observed the way that God brings people together and how great He really is. It has provided me with a loving community and great friends, but most importantly, it has helped me tremendously in deepening my faith. Youth fellowship, in particular, has been such an exceptional experience; I have built meaningful friendships with numerous like-minded peers. Being part of a Godly community has inspired me greatly to grow closer to Jesus, be more spiritually disciplined, and demonstrate love and patience. The youth leaders are always open to answering questions I may have; in fact, they always reply passionately and ensure I understand what they are saying.

What made me stay at Unionville Alliance Church was their commitment to outreach and spreading the gospel. I believe that one of their most admirable qualities is the way they consistently strive to embody Christ through the effort, care, humility, and acceptance they exhibit towards everybody in the church. Something I have specifically noticed is that UAC does an incredible job of getting new attendees involved with the church. Volunteering in the children's ministries and the soup kitchen have helped me truly learn the importance of serving others, just as Jesus did.

Ultimately, Unionville Alliance Church has profoundly improved my spiritual life. I have learned so much about Christ and what it means to follow him. Through small group discussions and sermons, I have gained understanding of scripture and how it applies to my daily life. I do not think I would be where I am today without UAC, as it has been a catalyst for spiritual growth and helped me navigate my teenage years as a Christian in such a secular world. I am beyond grateful for the experiences I have had at this church, and look forward to the ones I will have in the future."

After service each Sunday, there's always a group huddled at the front of the sanctuary. One only needs to observe the young adults from a distance and watch the camaraderie to see how this community has blossomed this past year.



As the Reclaimed community continues to grow, it has also continued to prove itself to be the inviting, warm, and loving environment it set out to be. Greeting newcomers with smiles and approving nods, our young adults never cease to amaze me with the massive heart they have for people coming to visit from all faith backgrounds and all walks of life. **The Lord blessed us with several newcomers exploring the Christian faith**, and it has been an incredible year of witnessing our existing community surround them with love, sharing their faith, encouraging them to take the step of becoming followers of Jesus, and being models of what disciples of Jesus look like.

With an eagerness to serve, whether with **Hampers of Hope**, **Operation Christmas Child**, leading worship during Sunday service, or just constantly open to being called upon when needed, the UAC young adults have cemented themselves as an integral part of our church community, leading by example in terms of service, love, and hospitality.



Now with members stepping into leadership roles and taking charge of planning activities such as our pool party and the amazing camping trip we had at Fair Havens, I am excited to see how God continues to build up this community and use these young adults to accomplish His will wherever He plants them in their lives.



FLORA'S STORY

"I was an atheist for my entire life, not counting that one summer when I was 9 years old. My parents had sent me to church camp, and I became a fanatic little preacher of the gospel. My stint with Christianity lasted a total of about 6 months before it exited my system for a good decade.

What never left my system, though, was my interest in religion. I was endlessly fascinated by what drew people towards the concept of God. I, myself, was drawn towards it, but at the time, I couldn't make sense of it. So I spent a good decade of my life with an obsessive curiosity touching all the nearby subjects — language, philosophy, culture, science, physics, metaphysics, ethics, materialism and morality. I had covered the surface area of the entire ball of spirituality. But at that time, God had not yet found me.

The story of how I came to Christ is a hilarious, long and winding yellow brick road—a collection of adventures for another day. But when it happened, and when I had become aware that it had happened, I did not walk—I sprinted—to the nearest church I could find. Literally.

I'd lived across from Unionville Alliance for a decade, oblivious to it. I decided to come alone to my first Sunday service, expecting to sit in, listen, try to absorb as much as I can, go home alone, and repeat the next week. But someone sitting in the pew behind me disrupted my plans. She tapped me gently on the shoulder and greeted me with a warm smile, catching me off guard. She asked if I

was new here, and who I'd come with. When I told her I'd come alone, she exchanged glances with the young woman sitting next to her, and invited me into a group of young adults, similar in age to me, to introduce myself. This group of young adults has welcomed me as a cherished member of the community ever since.

Through biweekly young adult-led reunions (Reclaimed), volunteering with seniors (Oasis) and youth (Power Up Leadership summer camp), an overnight young adult camping trip (Fairhavens), and weekly Sunday service, I learned that Unionville Alliance is not the type of church that you go to learn about God, take notes, and go home. No.

Unionville Alliance is a home in and of itself, in which the spirit of God reverberates deeply from the windows to the stage to the walls. In the beautiful voices of the choir. In the kindred spirits of the greeters. In the wisdom of the pastors. In the hardworking souls who have built the foundation of the church, and in those who pledge themselves continually to maintain it. The spirit of God is vibrant in the community, and the goodness of the people of whom it is made up of.

At Unionville Alliance, I've laughed, I've cried, and I've prayed countless times. I've listened. I've told stories. I've sung songs. The community has touched my heart with their grace and love, which has empowered me to go on and touch the lives of those around myself. It's a ripple effect, and the entire world will feel the impact. It happens one tap of a shoulder at a time.

The next Sunday service you attend, I encourage you to lift your head up from your pew and take a look at the faces around you. Say hi to someone new. Ask them how God has touched their life recently, or share how God has touched yours. You might be delightfully surprised by the outcome..."



This past year has been one of rebuilding for our Pastoral Care Ministry. Though we were without a leader for much of the year, our dedicated team continued to provide vital care to the congregation. Through acts of kindness and compassion, we ensured that our members felt supported in challenging times. The search for a new leader concluded when Michael Wong stepped forward. We are grateful for his servant heart and commitment to this ministry.

Throughout the year, we sent personalized reminders of love and support, especially around Christmas and other significant moments. These gestures included messages, cards, and small gifts to uplift spirits and remind our congregation of the church's care.

Our team made regular visits to those who were ill, both at home and in hospitals, offering prayer, comfort, and companionship. Regular phone calls were made to provide encouragement and check in with those unable to attend services or events.

To equip our team, we hosted a comprehensive training session focusing on essential aspects of pastoral care, including active listening, empathy, and providing spiritual support.

This past year has demonstrated the resilience of our Pastoral Care Ministry. With Michael Wong's leadership and new members joining the team, we look forward to growing our impact and continuing to serve our congregation with care and support.



Handmade greeting cards made for those unable to go out.

This past year has been a season of worship and celebration at Unionville Alliance Church, filled with milestones and spiritual growth. We have witnessed God's faithfulness through answered prayers, new members, and our worship ministry's growth.

A key highlight was the **75th Anniversary, where we gathered with past and present leadership, church members, and friends** to honour our church's legacy and God's faithfulness.

Our worship ministry saw great participation in several special services throughout the year. A key moment was when the Powerhouse Fellowship Soul Choir joined us for our Christmas Eve service. Their performance inspired many new sign-ups for our UAC choir relaunch, which played a significant role in leading the congregation in worship during Easter 2024 and Pentecost Sunday services.



We also want to acknowledge **Colin Ainsworth**, who concluded his time on staff after 3-years as Associate Worship Director, but continues to lead worship at UAC while pursuing his PhD in music. Colin's dedication, talent, and leadership have greatly impacted our worship ministry, and we are grateful for his ongoing contributions.

As we move forward into the new year, we remain committed to fostering a vibrant worship community that honours God and inspires our congregation. We are excited about the future and the continued growth of our worship ministry.

Thank you to everyone who has been a part of this journey. Your support, participation, and prayers are deeply appreciated.

"Serving at UAC has been one of the greatest blessings I've ever received. Through my service, I've had the opportunity to form incredible connections, from the children at camps to the talented musicians on the worship team. Building such a vibrant, outgoing community has allowed me to truly get to know the wonderful people around UAC on a deeper level." — Aaron Chen

"Serving the LORD as a drummer on UAC's Worship Team is both a blessing and a joy. A blessing because it draws me closer to the ministry and the meaning of His Word, as we bring our God-given musical talents to serve the King of Hosts. A joy because playing drums with our team feels like a sweet aroma of praise. We lead our UAC family into the presence of the King, and I play with a smile knowing it helps us all offer our best in worship. To Him be the glory!" — Michael Lopez

"I heard nothing but positive feedback from attendees at the Praise and Prayer night. We were complimented on how good the sound was, as well as the selection of songs. It was truly motivating for me to continue serving. Thank you for the opportunity!" — Nolly Cantos

*"There is always something special about going through your week listening to and studying a playlist of worship songs glorifying God as a method of practice to serve our community through the worship ministry at UAC, and then being able to apply it with talented and dedicated team members, all there for the same purpose of laying everything down in order to be used by God on a Sunday morning. **I did not realize how much I was craving this experience until Pastor Kesha offered me the opportunity to serve for the first time at UAC in May, and I was incredibly grateful and excited to accept and work towards it.** The combination of the administrative organization of songs to practice over the week, the teamwork with God-fearing musicians and tech teams, and the collective worshipping of God Almighty with the whole church family is an experience I want to continue pursuing with UAC!" — Keith Rajkumar*

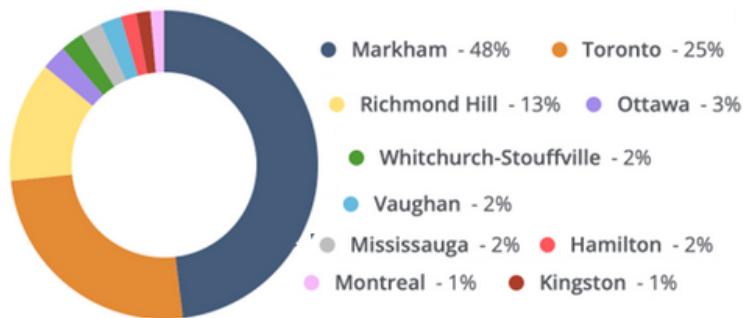
The Media Arts Team supports every aspect of our worship experience within the church. The measure of success is that our congregation can hear and see everything that enhances their worship experience. Worship, in its fullness, encompasses our entire Sunday morning experience. How do we achieve this? It takes several things working together: **people, planning, and technology.**

While volunteer capacity remained stable, we are seeking three key leaders who can be experts in an area. They would be responsible for training, coaching, and growth. We thank the team for their tireless efforts in continuing learning how to better use the tools that have been provided to spread the Good News.

Our online capabilities continue to be a key component of ministry. In this past year, we have had more than **1,500 online visitors from 10 countries** (92% from Canada), many being local regulars and several 'regulars' who are spread across North America.

People attend online for a variety of reasons: logistics, economics, social, etc. The challenge for the church is to make disciples of those who rarely or never attend in person.

This is a sample of the cities from which people have attended during our Sunday morning service:



It represents more than 1,500 people and almost 3,500 hours of watch time. This doesn't even include the people who watch at other times of the week!

We completed three projects this fiscal year:

- **Youth Building:** Replaced the audio system, which had components in service for 37 years—well past their life span. The youth worship team greatly appreciates the updated system.
- **Fellowship Hall:** Upgraded the A/V system with a ceiling-mounted projector, a proper projection screen, and an equipment cabinet.
- **Main Auditorium:** The audio system needs replacing. A firm was selected to design the new system, with completion expected in fall 2024.

Our God is a creative God, with the Bible beginning in Genesis 1:3 where God speaks and creates light into existence. Every Sunday, we use sound and light to communicate His story of redemption, extending that message through recordings to the other 167 hours in the week.

Audio: Clear sound is the backbone of our services, ensuring everyone can engage fully in worship. The audio system has served us well over the years but will need attention.

Projection: Displaying song lyrics, graphics, videos, and other media encourages engagement in worship and with biblical teachings.

Broadcast Video: Posting our sermons online as well as live streaming the entire service via Church Online, Facebook, and YouTube has been instrumental for those not attending in person.

Lighting: Proper illumination of our services for the congregation, both in person and through video, is a powerful tool that determines mood and focus.

"The Media Arts team plays a crucial role in the Church's mission. I know of someone who relies on streaming services, while others access recordings when they cannot attend. This work is essential for spreading the message. This past Christmas, I coordinated a photo booth in the church lobby, where visitors captured holiday memories with loved ones. Many shared these photos beyond the church, spreading the Christmas spirit. It was amazing to see how this simple initiative extended joy and connection beyond our walls." -Daniel Yam

This past year has been a wonderful experience as UAC continued to assist Pastor Andrew and his team bi-monthly from **Toronto Alliance Church (TAC)** as they minister to people in need in the downtown core.

From **September 2023 to March 2024**, we provided **120 individually packed lunches** every two months, each containing **two sandwiches, a drink box, dessert and fruit**. Special treats with **Bible verses** were included for Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. Along with the lunches, we supplied non-perishable food, clothing, new personal hygiene items, and monetary donations, all of which were greatly appreciated.

Starting in **March 2024**, TAC increased their requests to **150 bagged** lunches and food to serve **50-60 people** in person. This included **six large crockpots of chili or soup, sandwiches, fruit, desserts, and 12-15 UAC volunteers to help serve in-person**. UAC members continued to respond with generosity, consistently meeting or exceeding the needs. We have seen time and time again how God works in the hearts of the UAC members, alongside a few reminders/requests for assistance, that He has always provided!

In total, **over 2,000 sandwiches, non-perishable goods, clothing, and nearly \$800 in donations were provided**. Pastor Andrew has passed along a few stories letting us know how your contributions have impacted the people he serves:

After starting in-person sit-down dinners and also chapel services again in February 2024, I have been deeply encouraged for a number of reasons.

First, there seems to be a slow but steady general increase of people coming and eating dinner upstairs with us. Second, because many people grab a dinner at the door, and then leave, those who come upstairs generally are wanting a peaceful place to be and really appreciate the meal. Many of those who come up for dinner

remain for the chapel service, which is great; and almost every week I am struck by how those who stay for the chapel service are hungry and thirsty for God's words. The picture I get is this: people sun-tanning on the beach, soaking in the rays coming at them. That is what it has often felt like while I have been preaching or leading in worship: people soaking in the words and comfort of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is one woman who Pastor Bill was talking with. He found out that she actually became a Christian several years back through the preaching happening at Community Night - she just hadn't told anyone! She also said that when she started coming to the Saturday night dinners, she began to become much healthier, as she was finally getting a good source of nutrition. That's pretty neat in regard to Christ satisfying both spiritual and more bodily needs!

A few weeks ago a man came in and sat down for the meal. He really enjoyed it. He ended up staying for the chapel service; and every time I looked at him as I spoke, I saw him nodding or with a reflective posture. I talked with him after. He said it must have been God leading him to the service as he was trying to change his life around. He had been sober for a couple of weeks and was trying to walk on a better path. He was so very appreciative for the meal and the Scriptures"



UAC's TAC coordinators have greatly enjoyed working alongside Pastor Andrew and his team for many years. However, God has now called Pastor Andrew to a new ministry in Alberta. For the upcoming year, we will be serving with Pastor Bill and Pastor Oscar, and we look forward to seeing how God will continue to meet the physical and spiritual needs of the downtown community through this ministry.

The goal of the women's ministry this year was to create opportunities for women to connect and build relationships. Three events were held throughout the year.

At the first event, **Shusma Adhikari** shared her story of **Empowering Silent Voices in Nepal**. Shusma is the co-founder of Aanandit Charity Centre, providing opportunities to empower underprivileged girls to grow to their potential and to give them a voice. This event was open to all.

In February, a **winter escape** provided physical and spiritual refreshment with gentle exercise, discussion, and connection, giving women a break from the winter blues.

In late spring, a **hike around Too Good Pond** enabled women to connect while enjoying nature.



Feedback from Women:

"The hike was really good, and I went home feeling such peace. It was a blessed time with everyone, connecting with nature and getting to know you all better. Thank you for that wonderful time!"

"I was thrilled by the hike. The place was perfect, an easy walk for all ages. It was a beautiful prelude to Mother's Day, as we felt God's peace and love walking with His Holy Spirit."

"The winter escape broke the gloomy spirit of winter. I felt encouraged through sharing, exercise, and meaningful connections."

UAC Life Groups are growing, with **19 active groups** involving **230 participants**. Additionally, **10 individuals** are eagerly waiting to join. Our goal is for all Life Groups to be **God-breathed, transformational, and life-giving spaces**.

New Life Group leaders received detailed training to maintain quality and impact. A unique month-long launch after a shortened Sunday service offered a convenient way to try life groups, resulting in **7 new groups**.

To **facilitate parent participation**, UAC subsidized childcare costs. Thank you to Steven Hanna and Kaitlin Timbers who graciously and faithfully cared for children during Life Group sessions.

Wonderful outcomes this year:

- People supported each other with love
- People trusted one another enough to share their struggles and vulnerabilities
- People encouraged each other to follow Christ.
- People grew in their faith.



Member reflections:

- *"I've grown in knowing God on a personal level. He has certainly changed some of my attitudes."*
- *"Members inspired me to read the Bible"*
- *"I've learned that I can listen to God's words at any time, even while walking. Worship songs make me forget I'm even walking!"*
- *"I love and enjoy my Life Group class. I appreciate, love, and respect everyone. By each one's input and participation, I learn and grow in Christ Jesus."*

We praise God for these blessings and look forward to even greater things with hope and expectation.



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