



# Living the Bigger Story

2025 RENEW CHURCH ANNUAL REPORT



*“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works,  
which God prepared in advance for us to do.”*

EPHESIANS 2:10



# Table of Contents



<b>Ch. 1:</b> Living the Bigger Story, <i>Lead Pastor's Report</i>	<b>2</b>
<b>Ch. 2:</b> Shepherding the Flock, <i>Elder Board Report</i>	<b>5</b>
<b>Ch. 3:</b> The Journey Continues, <i>Executive Director's Report</i>	<b>8</b>
<b>Ch. 4:</b> A Home of Our Own, <i>Capital Campaign Progress Report</i>	<b>10</b>
<b>MINISTRY REPORTS</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Ch. 5:</b> Buds, Sprouts & Roots, <i>Renew Kids</i>	<b>13</b>
<b>Ch. 6:</b> Momentum Rising, <i>Ignite Youth</i>	<b>16</b>
<b>Ch. 7:</b> Hear, Understand, Bear Fruit, <i>Society (Young Adults)</i>	<b>19</b>
<b>Ch. 8:</b> Sharing Life Together, <i>Renew Groups</i>	<b>20</b>
<b>Ch. 9:</b> All In, <i>Men's Ministry</i>	<b>22</b>
<b>Ch. 10:</b> Fun, Fellowship, Food, <i>Women's Ministry</i>	<b>24</b>
<b>Ch. 11:</b> Milestones & Celebrations, <i>Baptisms &amp; Family Dedications</i>	<b>26</b>
<b>Ch. 12:</b> Learning to Follow Jesus, <i>Discipleship</i>	<b>27</b>
<b>Ch. 13:</b> The Soundtrack of Our Story, <i>Worship</i>	<b>28</b>
<b>Ch. 14:</b> The Invisible Thread, <i>Tech Team</i>	<b>30</b>
<b>Ch. 15:</b> Welcomed With Warmth, <i>First Impressions Team</i>	<b>32</b>
<b>Ch. 16:</b> At Home & Connected, <i>Integration</i>	<b>33</b>
<b>Ch. 17:</b> Seeking God, <i>Prayer Ministry</i>	<b>34</b>
<b>Ch. 18:</b> The Walk Together, <i>Compass Mentorship</i>	<b>35</b>
<b>Ch. 19:</b> Courting Friendships, <i>Renew Connect / Pickleball</i>	<b>36</b>
<b>Ch. 20:</b> Woven Together, <i>Renew Knits</i>	<b>37</b>
<b>Ch. 21:</b> A Summer of Service, <i>Summer Internships</i>	<b>38</b>
<b>Ch. 22:</b> The Story We Shared, <i>2025 Events</i>	<b>39</b>



# CHAPTER ONE

## *Living the Bigger Story*

LEAD PASTOR'S REPORT By Pastor Bartley Sawatsky



If 2024 was all about “newness”—a new meeting location, new offices, and a new vision for a permanent home—2025 will be remembered as a year where Renew gained traction and made progress in almost every area. As we continue to be faithful to our calling, investing in and around Milton, we are seeing more and more people get connected to Renew and to Jesus.

There is something about giving to a capital campaign that keeps us focused on God's bigger story—that we are here, first and foremost, to build His kingdom. Knowing that we are moving toward our own permanent facilities helps us to be patient in our current realities of setting



up and tearing down equipment, doing children's ministry in less-than-ideal conditions, and socializing in a theatre as moviegoers hurry past us on Sunday morning. At the same time, it helps us keep the bigger picture: that church is not merely a building, but a community.

On that note, newcomers continue to check out Renew on a weekly basis. Many are attending **Connection Point**

and deciding to make Renew their home church, for which we are very grateful. We have been challenging our young families with children to commit to weekly attendance so that we can gain traction in our Renew Kids program. Slowly but surely, that is happening. As predicted, a new wave of babies joined us in 2025; praise the Lord for growing families! Nursing moms have been making use of the “Nest,” a theatre we

have made available for them to attend to their little ones. Our child dedication in December saw five babies dedicated—all boys! We also ran a parenting class this year to help prepare our young families for what lies ahead.

Our Renew Groups continue to thrive as we have committed to supporting our group leaders more. Last year, we asked all of our groups to go through

the **Serve** material, refocusing us on how God has called each of us to give of our time, talent, and treasure. Covering these core topics is helping to get everyone at Renew on the same page. Our groups also continue to be a place where people find real support for their daily challenges and where prayer flows freely. I have heard so many encouraging stories of people stepping up to care for their brothers and sisters in need. One great example was Pastor Barry and Bonnie Jones' online group supporting Jeff Powell after his surgery. The way the entire congregation contributed to help with the family's financial costs was also an inspiration.

## CHALLENGES & TRIUMPHS

This past year was marked by significant political unrest, something that reminds us of the need to keep our eyes on God's bigger story and to live out of it. It can be very tempting to slip down the "rabbit holes" of social and political debate and lose sight of the bigger kingdom that we represent. We continue to look to the Lord for focus and wisdom as we navigate these unprecedented times—times of polarized politics, economic insecurity, and growing tension. More than ever, the world needs the church to be a beacon of peace and hope in the midst of the darkness.



*Renew at the Toronto Blue Jays*

As we watched our Toronto Blue Jays make an unexpected run at the World Series, we were reminded—not only of the joy and fellowship that can be found in life's day-to-day routines—but of the fact that Jesus is at work all around us. The number of players who were forthright in proclaiming their faith was an encouragement to believers everywhere, and another reminder that there is always a bigger story at play in our lives.

On a personal note, I had the immense privilege this year of witnessing Christ's church in many diverse contexts—in various parts of the USA, on the islands of Georgian Bay, in the Central African Republic, and in various cities in Germany. God is alive and well, and seeing so many different expressions of His body, the church, was an inspiration to me.



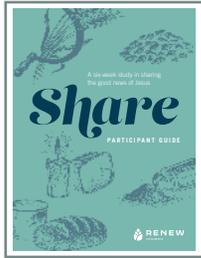
*Charis Alliance in Central African Republic*

## 2025 BOOKMARKS

-  Investments in and around the Milton community
-  Home of Our Own capital campaign
-  New visitors and members
-  Increasing attendance to Connection Point
-  Growing momentum in Renew Kids
-  5 babies dedicated and Parenting Class started
-  Renew Groups thriving
-  Renew members caring for each other
-  A growing need for the church in unprecedented times
-  The reach of Christ's church around the world

# THE STORY CONTINUES TO UNFOLD

What can we expect in 2026? Only our Lord knows. Here at Renew, we are continuing to commit ourselves to Milton and the surrounding communities where we live. We want to be faithful to the Lord right where He has us.



We will be teaching the updated **Share** material in our Renew Groups with the goal of training every one of our people how to have spiritual conversations wherever they find themselves. We will continue to use our various events to connect with friends and family members, and we will grow in our commitment to biblical hospitality.

We have an **Ignite Parent Forum** planned for April 2026 where we will talk with parents about how the church and home need to partner together in the discipleship of teenagers. We will be addressing the challenges of social media and cellphone use as one of many forums aimed at equipping our parents to disciple their teens more effectively.

We will also be adding a special twist once a month to our **Renew Kids** program, where Jen Bryant and her team will provide a special week for children to invite their friends to Sunday school. Stay tuned for more details!

Of course, we will continue to give to our **Home of Our Own** campaign as we keep our eyes open for facilities that come on the market. We will continue to serve the Lord by serving one another faithfully each week, making a point of helping newcomers feel at home.

## A Final Word,

It is amazing what God can do through people who remain faithful to the task of knowing God and making Him known. The Apostle Paul reminded us: “Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful” (1 Cor. 4:2). In the midst of our busy lives and multiple narratives, let’s continue to commit ourselves to the bigger story of what God is doing.

Thank you to everyone for the part you have played in 2025. As you look through these pages, be reminded of what God has done and expect great things in 2026. We don’t know what the future holds, but we know who holds the future! 🙌

# CHAPTER TWO

## *Shepherding the Flock*

### BOARD OF ELDERS REPORT

In 1 Peter 5, the apostle Peter wrote these words:

“So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder... shepherd the flock of God that is among you.”

*(1 Peter 5:1-2)*

This shepherding has many aspects to it, as this report reflects.

## STRATEGIC VISION & FUTURE PLANNING

The first aspect of our work involves strategic vision. Last year, we took a significant step with our young adults (ages 18–35), seeking their input through a comprehensive survey and a vital Vision Meeting in January 2025. This year, we continued that initiative with ongoing plans for further engagement as we empower the next generation.

We also worked to cast a 5-to-20-year vision for our church, emphasizing the need for a ‘missionary mindset’ in our community. A major part of this vision was the launch of our two-year capital fundraising campaign, **Home of Our Own**. Our goal is to raise \$700,000 by June 2027 to secure a permanent facility that will provide stability and a platform for future growth.

### 2025 RENEW BOARD OF ELDERS



# MISSIONS & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Missions remained a significant priority for the Elder Board in 2025. As a group, we read and discussed *Missions: How the Local Church Goes Global* by Andy Johnson. This study led to the development of a formal Mission Policy document, a process which is currently ongoing to ensure our local and global efforts are healthy and gospel-centred.

Additionally, we spearheaded and supported practical outreach events within our community, including:

*Pickleball connections*



*Men's Table*



*Baptism BBQ*



*Movies in the Park*



*Trunk or Treat*



*Harvest Party*



## STEWARDSHIP & PASTORAL CARE

Stewardship is a major ministry of our Board. We oversaw the 2024–2025 and 2025–2026 budgets, a task that confirmed God's blessing on our church as giving consistently met or exceeded estimates. Our annual audit proceeded smoothly, and we integrated **MortarStone Analytics** to provide high-fidelity tracking for our capital campaign.

The administration of our **Benevolence Fund** allowed us the privilege of impacting the lives of those in need, including the provision of a prosthetic for a church member. These moments remind us that we are a family called to bear one another's burdens.

## LEADERSHIP & THE WORD

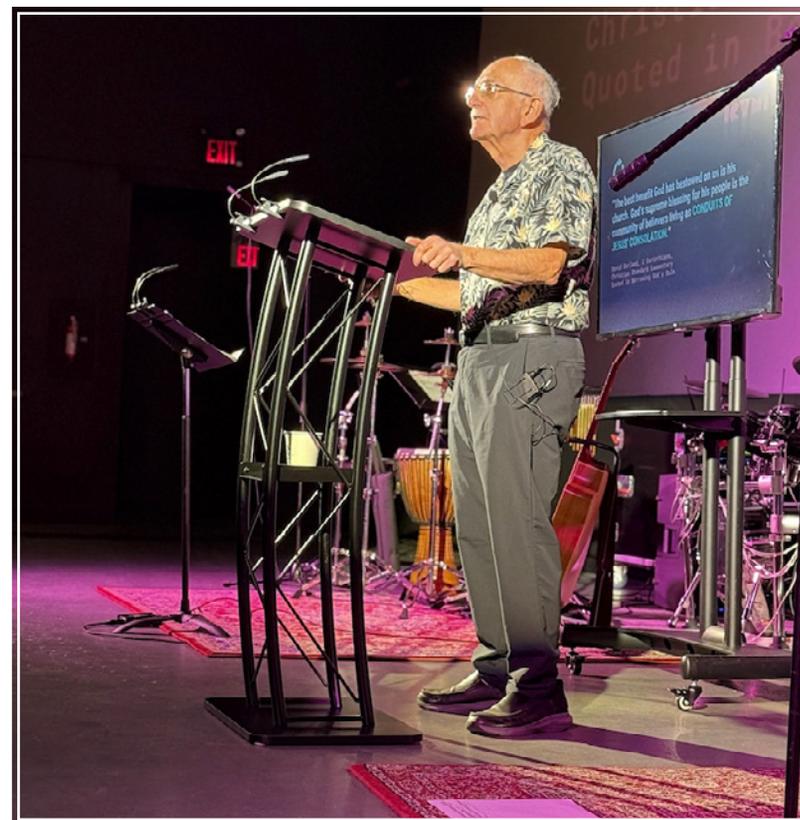
We continue to pray and plan for the future of our leadership. Following the resignation of Mike Amaral in early 2025, we focused our efforts on identifying and training potential new elder candidates.

A very impactful part of our time together was the training provided by Pastor Darcy on “strengthening the public reading of Scripture.” As Pastor Darcy noted, reading God's Word in public is a historic practice of the church, dating back to Jesus reading from the scroll of Isaiah. This initiative represents our commitment to Paul's words to Timothy: **“Devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture.”** (1 Timothy 4:13).

Ultimately, your Board has had a year of hard work, exciting initiatives, and a renewed sense of unity. We remain dedicated to our biblical mandate: **“Exercise oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you... being examples to the flock.”** (1 Peter 5:2-3). 🌿



*Elder Darcy MacCallum leading a session at the 2025 Men's Advance*



*Elder Barry Jones teaching on Sunday morning*

# CHAPTER THREE

## The Journey Continues

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT By Erik Russell



As we look back on fiscal 2025, I am filled with gratitude for how God is moving through the people of Renew Church. This report is more than a summary of finances; it is a testament to our collective commitment to “finding our lives in a bigger story”. At right is a reflection on our journey over the past year and the vision we are building together.

### A YEAR OF FAITHFUL GIVING

Our community's generosity continues to be the engine of our ministry. I am thrilled to share that we concluded our 2025 fiscal year in a position of strength, with total giving exceeding our budget by nearly \$10,000. This surplus allowed us to enter the new year with stability and confidence.



While the early months of our new fiscal cycle have seen giving track slightly below our ambitious targets—averaging about 88% of our budget—the underlying trend is incredibly encouraging. We are seeing high levels of participation, with more than 100 giving units (households) contributing each month. This reflects a broad and committed base of families who believe in the mission of Renew.

### HOME OF OUR OWN

*Building for the future*

The Home of Our Own campaign remains a central focus as we seek a permanent space to plant deeper roots in our community. This year, the vision began to take a tangible financial shape:

#### Pledge Progress

80 committed pledges

\$500K total pledge value

We have maintained a strong foundation of approximately 80 committed pledges, totaling nearly \$500,000.



#### Realized Growth



Our building account grew significantly this year. By the end of 2025, we transitioned from early-stage savings to over \$150,000 in total cash reserves specifically for our future home.

#### Analytics



We have integrated **MortarStone Analytics** to assist the board in tracking this growth and ensuring high levels of accountability.

# STEWARDSHIP AND WISE INVESTMENT

As your leadership team, we take the stewardship of your gifts seriously. This year, we implemented a new strategy for our **Reserve Fund**, moving from traditional savings to active investments in diversified funds. This shift allows our “rainy day” reserves to grow through market gains, ensuring every resource is working as hard as possible for the Kingdom.

## FINANCE TEAM



Barb Mainguy



Jen Kowalsky

& Erik Russell, Executive Director

## FINANCE COMMITTEE



Gary Coates



Derek Hounsell



Darcy MacCallum



Dehui Yu

& Erik Russell, Executive Director

# MINISTRY TRENDS AND COMMUNITY GROWTH

The health of our church is best seen in the people filling our seats and serving in our halls:

## Growing Attendance



We have seen a steady upward trend in our Sunday gatherings, recently reaching milestones of nearly 170 people.

## New Faces



We continue to be a welcoming church, praying for over 50 newcomers this year.

## A Place for Families



The launch of **The Nest**—our dedicated space for parents with infants—has made the Sunday experience more accessible for young families.

## A Serving Heart



Our volunteer teams are the backbone of our operations, with nearly 40 people serving every week.

# LOOKING AHEAD

As we move into 2026, our focus remains on closing the gap in our general giving while keeping our eyes fixed on the horizon of a permanent facility. We are a church growing not just in number, but in depth and intentionality. Thank you for your continued prayers, faithful service, and financial partnership. 🙏



# CHAPTER FOUR

## *A Home of Our Own*

PROGRESS REPORT By Erik Russell

**W**hen we launched the Home of Our Own initiative, we knew we were asking the Renew family to step into a bigger story of faith and sacrifice. Today, I am overflowing with gratitude as I share how God has moved through your generosity. This campaign is about so much more than brick and mortar; it is about creating a permanent "embassy" for the Kingdom—a place where we can plant deep roots and serve our community without the limitations of a weekly "setup and teardown" cycle. Whether we secure a facility in our current area or a surrounding community, our heart is to have a space that we can truly call home.

### CAMPAIGN PROGRESS AT A GLANCE

I am thrilled to report that our collective vision is taking a very tangible financial shape. As we navigate this two-year journey toward our \$700,000 goal, the engagement from our church body has been remarkable:



#### Pledge Total

We have maintained a strong foundation of:

**80** committed pledges

totaling nearly:

**\$500,000**

This represents over:

**71%** of our ultimate financial target.



#### Cash On Hand

We have transitioned from early-stage savings to over:

**\$150,000**

in total cash reserves specifically set aside for our future home.



#### Investment Growth

We are working hard to make your resources work for the Kingdom. By moving our building fund into active, diversified investments, our reserves are growing not just through contributions, but through wise market gains.

## TRUSTING THE JOURNEY

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While our pledges have not yet met our final goal, we are encouraged at the level of sacrifice and participation we see every week. We are trusting God to meet the need through our people and to find a place that will be suitable for our needs and within our means. Every dollar added to this fund represents a step toward a customized space where we can expand our ministries and serve our neighbours more effectively.

## AN INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

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As we look ahead toward **June 2027**, I want to invite you to keep stretching your faith alongside us. Whether you have already made a pledge or are still prayerfully considering how to be involved, please know that every gift represents a stone in the foundation of what God is building here. We aren't just looking for a building; we are looking for a home where future generations will find their life in God's story. Thank you for being a people who lead with "missionary mindsets" and for the incredible ways you have already gone first in your generosity. 🌱



# Ministry Reports



# CHAPTER FIVE

## *Buds, Sprouts & Roots*

RENEW KIDS REPORT By Inge Limanseputro



### ROOTED IN GOD'S WORD

Our Children's Ministry continues to use **The Gospel Project** curriculum, which faithfully teaches the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Each lesson points children to Christ, helping them understand that Jesus is not simply part of the Bible's story—He is the center of it. By learning Scripture in its full context, children begin to see how each story fits into God's greater plan rather than viewing passages as isolated lessons.

Our desire is for every child to grow in a deep and lasting understanding that the Bible is one unified story of God's love and redemption. This foundation helps children not only learn the stories but also understand who God is and how they belong in His story.



## A DEDICATED AND GROWING TEAM

We are deeply thankful for our 29 faithful volunteers who serve week after week with dedication and love. They prepare lessons, care for children, and model Christlike character, showing that children's ministry is not simply childcare, but a calling to disciple the next generation.

This year, we have welcomed more young volunteers, bringing fresh energy alongside our experienced team members. Together, these diverse ages and teaching styles create a balanced and vibrant environment where every child can benefit from the unique gifts of our team.



**29** *faithful volunteers serve in our Renew Kids program*

## A PLACE FOR EVERY CHILD

Our Renew Kids ministry includes three classes designed to meet children where they are:

### 'Lil' Buds

For babies through age five.



### Roots

For elementary-aged children.



### Special Care

For children with special needs.



These classes allow us to provide age-appropriate teaching while creating a safe and welcoming environment. Every child is valued, included, and encouraged to grow in their understanding of God's love.



*Renew Kids 2025 Christmas performance*

## PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES

We believe that parents play a vital role in the spiritual growth of their children. This year, we have focused on strengthening our partnership with families through:

**Personal Connection:** One-on-one meetings and phone calls.

**Weekly Resources:** Emails with family activities connected to the Sunday lesson.

**Parents' Meetings:** Held twice a year to share our vision, safety practices, and ministry updates.

Our goal is to support parents as they disciple their children at home and to ensure open, supportive communication between the church and our families. We give God all the glory for what He has done and what He will continue to do! 🙌

**“Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much.”**

*Matthew 25:21*



# CHAPTER SIX

## Momentum Rising

IGNITE YOUTH REPORT By Jake Troughton



Ignite experienced a year of significant growth and spiritual momentum in 2025. One of our primary victories was taking our largest group ever to the **Radiate Winter Retreat** at Ontario Pioneer Camp. Twenty-six students and eight leaders travelled to Muskoka for teaching, worship, and community building—including midnight tubing and our annual broomball tournament.



*Radiate Winter Retreat 2025, Ontario Pioneer Camp, Muskoka*





Momentum Youth Conference 2025, Indiana Wesleyan University

We continued that momentum by attending the **Momentum Youth Conference**, where our Sr. Highs and graduating Jr. Highs joined over 2,000 students to hear from speakers like Tony Livigni, Christopher Yuan, and Mark Clark. We capped off the season with our annual summer camping trip and a visit to the Fugere farm, providing vital space for new students to connect with their small groups. We also launched a monthly “Worship and Games Night,” a new rhythm designed to welcome new faces and focus our hearts on Jesus.



## OUR TEAM & VOLUNTEERS

This year marked a season of transition for our leadership. We celebrated as Jaime Ting moved to lead Society, and Zack Fugere stepped back as he and Sarah welcomed their first child, Theodore. We are currently blessed by eight dedicated leaders who serve our students weekly:



**Liam Amaral:**

Jr. High Youth Intern (overseeing Sunday and Tuesday programming and the Jr. High boys' group).

### Jr. High Girls:



Vicki MacCallum



Rachel Haag



Zuriel Lagunes

### Sr. High Girls:



Elizabeth Reda



Delia McDonald

### Sr. High Boys:



Greg Huff

Elizabeth also shares her gifts by leading worship for our monthly gatherings, while Delia manages essential behind-the-scenes operations that keep Ignite running smoothly.



McFormal 2025



## MINISTRY TRENDS

God is clearly moving in our ministry, and the “results” are visible in both our depth and our data. Our average attendance has grown steadily, moving from 26 students in the first semester to an average of 30 students. This growth, coupled with our record-breaking retreat attendance, highlights the increasing hunger for community among our students.

## “A HOME OF OUR OWN”

While Ignite has been blessed to meet at the Renew Offices, we are beginning to outgrow our current space as we now average 30 people in a single room. As we look forward to **A Home of Our Own**, we anticipate how a permanent facility will provide the margin we need to continue growing, playing, and discipling the next generation in a space truly designed for them. 🌱



Momentum fundraiser bake sale

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## *Hear, Understand, Bear Fruit*

SOCIETY (YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY) REPORT By Liam Amaral & Jaime Ting



The fall of 2025 marked a season of transition for Society. With shifts in leadership and several members moving into other Renew Groups, the culture of our community shifted significantly. While this change was challenging at times, it also created space for discernment and renewal.

Through prayer and reflection, our new leadership team sensed a clear call to focus more deeply on God's Word. Inspired by the *Parable of the Sower*, our theme for the year encouraged us to hear the Word, understand it, and bear good fruit. This conviction led to meaningful changes in our weekly rhythm, as we began incorporating Bible study, prayer, and worship into every Friday night gathering.



*Holiday celebrations*

Although Society is now a smaller group of about 14 regular attendees, the community has become more close-knit and intentional. This smaller size has fostered deeper relationships, honest conversations, and a strong sense of belonging. To build these connections, we shared many memorable moments together, including a summer camping trip in Algonquin, a Blue Jays watch party, a Halloween hot chocolate handout, Sunday lunches, and a New Year's Eve celebration watching the Stranger Things finale.



*Algonquin camping trip*

Throughout the year, guests consistently commented on the warmth and kindness they experienced within Society. We recognize this hospitality as a reflection of Christ at work in our community and are grateful for the ways God has shaped us during this season.

As we look ahead to 2026, we invite you to join us in prayer—that each member of Society would not only learn about God but truly experience Him and boldly live out the gospel. We trust that even in seasons of change, God

is faithfully forming us as part of the bigger story He is writing at Renew. 🌱



*Halloween hot chocolate handout*

# CHAPTER EIGHT

## Sharing Life Together

RENEW GROUPS REPORT By Denise Gervais



**R**enew Groups are where our community is lived out most fully at Renew Church. These groups provide space for sharing life, praying together, studying Scripture, and learning how to live faithfully in God’s bigger story. They are where relationships deepen, encouragement is shared, and faith becomes practical.

For many, Renew Groups serve as their first introduction to Jesus and Renew Church, thanks to the hospitality of our leaders and hosts. We are seeing members pray for one another and provide physical, emotional, and spiritual care throughout all of life’s

seasons. In addition to our regular groups, specialized Bible studies—such as reading through the Bible in a year—help us implement and obey what is taught on Sunday mornings. Members are focusing on their role in God’s bigger story by being intentional in their workplaces and engaging in meaningful faith conversations.

In 2025, we welcomed the addition of another Renew Group, bringing our total to 12 “family units” meeting weekly across the western GTA, including

one group on Zoom. Some groups are currently bursting at capacity—a testament to the desire our people have to connect and grow together. Nine new members joined a group this year, and our consistent attendance remains strong at 73%, showing the high value our members place on these communities. We are now prayerfully focused on training leaders for the 2026–2027 year to create even more space for connection! 🌱

**12** *Renew Groups*

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**73%** *attendance*



# CHAPTER NINE

## All in,

MEN'S MINISTRY REPORT By Erik Russell & Marek Kowalsky



2025 Men's Advance at Ontario Pioneer Camp, Muskoka



These men face both new challenges and incredible opportunities to demonstrate the love of God, and as a ministry, we are committed to helping them become the husbands and fathers God calls them to be.

space for support and spiritual growth. We welcome all men to join us for this hour of fellowship; if you are interested, please reach out to Erik or Marek for the current location details.

**A**t Renew, we believe the role of men is foundational to the health of our families and our church. We are called to be men of God who seek after His heart, leading our households with humility and protecting those entrusted to our care. This year has been particularly special as we've celebrated several new fathers in our midst, with more expected in 2026.

A central pillar of our community is the weekly **Men's Table** breakfast. Every Friday morning from 7:00 to 8:00 a.m., a group of men meets at a local restaurant in Milton to share their lives, study a book together, and pray for one another. This gathering has become a vital weekly anchor point, providing a consistent

One of the most significant moments of the year was the **Men's Advance** held this past November at Ontario Pioneer Camp. Nearly 40 men gathered under the theme "**ALL IN: For You, Your Family, Your World.**" This theme challenged us to consider what it looks like to be fully committed to Christ in every sphere of

life. Being “All In” means seeking personal spiritual renewal (For You), taking up the mantle of spiritual leadership at home (Your Family), and recognizing our mission to be light and salt in the places we work and live (Your World).

It was a powerful time where we sought God’s direction and challenged each other both spiritually and physically. The unique setting of the retreat allowed for moments of transformation and deep spiritual connection that are hard to replicate in the busyness of daily life. We are already looking forward to our next Men’s Advance, which is scheduled for November 5–7, 2026.

To foster connections across different ages, we also continued our **Mix Events**. These gatherings are intentionally designed to provide times for multi-generational interaction among the men and boys of our church. By creating a relaxed and fun environment, we provide space for mentorship, guidance, and the building of strong role models. A highlight of 2025 was our bowling night, where the competition was friendly, the laughter was plenty, and the food was shared in great company.

As we look toward 2026, we are eager to create even more opportunities for the men of Renew to connect and grow. Whether through our weekly breakfast, our large-scale retreats, or casual Mix events, our goal remains the same: to sharpen one another as “iron sharpens iron” and to stand together as a brotherhood devoted to the mission of Christ. 🌊



*2025 Men’s Advance at Ontario Pioneer Camp, Muskoka*



*The Mix: Bowling*



*The Mix: Campfire night at the Troughton home*

# CHAPTER TEN

## *Fun, Fellowship, Food,*

WOMEN'S MINISTRY REPORT By Sarah MacCallum



*The Mix: Toronto*



*2025 Women's Retreat at Guelph Bible Conference Centre*



The Women's Ministry exists to create space for women to step out of the busyness of life and find time to relax in meaningful community. It provides opportunities to form connections with other women beyond Renew Groups and ministry teams, bringing together generations to mix, mingle, support, and encourage one another—both in the moment and through ongoing relationships.

Throughout the year, we gathered for game nights, potlucks, walks along the harbourfront, and bowling. In each of these moments, connections were formed naturally through laughter and shared stories. Our **Mix Events** also included students in Grades 6–12, creating beautiful opportunities for intergenerational relationships and informal mentorship to grow.

One of the highlights of the year was our annual **Women's Retreat** in Guelph. The weekend gave women the chance to slow down, reflect, and explore what it looks like to serve God faithfully in every season of life. A memorable part of the retreat was the scavenger hunt through downtown Guelph, which allowed us to explore and deepen friendships in a fun, relaxed way.

These gatherings remind us that community matters. As Renew continues to grow—and as we look forward to **A Home of Our Own**—we are grateful for ministries that model what it means to belong. Creating space for connection today lays the foundation for a deeper community in the years to come.



*Women's tea*



If you haven't attended a women's event yet, you're missing out on the "three F's": fun, fellowship, and food! There is always room for more, and we look forward to welcoming you into the story God is writing among us. 🌿



*The Mix: Pajama party*



*The Mix: Bowling*

# CHAPTER ELEVEN

## Milestones & Celebrations

BAPTISMS & FAMILY DEDICATIONS By Denise Gervais



2025 was a year filled with life-changing and joy-filled milestones at Renew Church. In August, we gathered outdoors to celebrate two individuals publicly declaring their faith through baptism—a profound moment of obedience and trust in Jesus.

*These celebrations are more than ceremonial; they mark God's transformative work in people's lives and remind our church family of the hope and new life available in Christ.*

faithfully. Celebrating these moments together helps us see our individual stories as part of a much larger narrative, where God's work spans generations and connects us all.

Having A Home of Our Own would eventually allow us to perform baptisms during our Sunday services. This would provide the flexibility for people to declare their life to Jesus more quickly, reflecting the immediacy we see in the Bible. Living these moments as a community reminds us that we are part of God's bigger story—one that continues to unfold with each person who chooses to follow Him. 🌱



# CHAPTER TWELVE

## Learning to Follow Jesus

DISCIPLESHIP REPORT By Denise Gervais

At Renew Church, learning to follow Jesus happens in every aspect of life and ministry—through worship, serving, Sunday teaching, men’s and women’s ministries, youth and children’s programs, Mix events, and community involvement. In 2025, discipleship also included a variety of focused classes and workshops designed to deepen our biblical understanding and practical application.

These learning opportunities included:

### The Master Strategy for Reaching Muslims

A great turnout filled the church office for two full-day workshops.

### Do Good, Do Well Financial Stewardship

Several workshops focused on financial strategy and biblical stewardship.

### Parenting

20 participants attended sessions for parents of newborns through kindergarten-aged children.

### Theology Sessions

6 people attended in-depth theology workshops.

### That Man Called Jesus

5 participants joined this focused study.

### What Happens Next

The entire church participated in this series through Sunday services and Renew Group teaching.

Our administrative offices have been a huge blessing, serving as a dedicated space for these sessions. Looking forward, A Home of Our Own would allow all classes and activities to be hosted on-site, providing more flexibility and further strengthening our discipleship efforts.

Daily Bible reading continues to be a cornerstone of our growth. Many members follow the YouVersion Bible App devotional plans led by our Discipleship Director, Denise Gervais. Dozens of people read Scripture daily—studying, sharing insights, and applying lessons to their faith journeys. This ongoing engagement ensures that what is taught on Sundays is lived out through the week.

Discipleship at Renew is about more than knowledge; it is about obedience and transformation. By equipping, encouraging, and walking alongside one another, we grow in faith together, living more fully as followers of Christ in the story God is writing. 🌱



*The Master Strategy for Reaching Muslims*



*Do Good, Do Well Financial Stewardship Class*

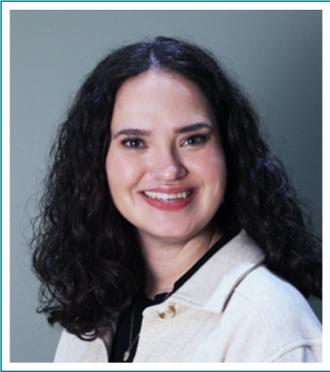


Connect with Denise Gervais on the YouVersion Bible app to join our devotional plans

# CHAPTER THIRTEEN

## *The Soundtrack to Our Story*

WORSHIP MINISTRY REPORT By Elizabeth Reda



At Renew, our worship ministry thrives on a dedicated team that serves in community. Every Sunday, volunteers arrive early at the Cineplex to work alongside the Tech Team, transforming a movie theatre into a space for worship. We are grateful for this unique venue and the diverse gifts our team brings each week.



## TECHNICAL & MUSICAL GROWTH

In early 2025, we transitioned to four wireless in-ear monitors (IEMs). This upgrade improved stage mobility and streamlined operations for our tech team by reducing stage clutter. We also introduced 13 new songs this year, including anthems like *I Believe* by Phil Wickham and Christmas selections such as *Manger Throne*.

Beyond Sunday mornings, several team members now lead worship for Ignite Youth monthly. We hope this partnership inspires the next generation to see how they can use their musical gifts to serve the church.





Christmas Eve-Eve



Worship at Ignite Youth

## LOOKING AHEAD

In 2026, we plan to transition our weekly playlists from Spotify into Planning Center Services, centralizing our Sunday preparation. Our prayer is to continue deepening our bonds as a team while striving for excellence in our service to the Lord. 🌿



## OUR 2025 TEAM

### Vocals

- Myriam Fugere
- Rosalie Fugere
- Anna Gaglardi
- Stephanie Hounsell
- Kylie Sawatsky

### Keys

- Lois Fung
- Gabriel Lagunes
- Sarah MacCallum
- Deborah Ng
- Bartley Sawatsky
- Lydia Ting

### Vocals & Instruments

- Mathieu Fugere (Acoustic)
- Zack Fugere (Acoustic/  
Bass)
- Dominic Fung (Acoustic/  
Drums)
- Darcy MacCallum  
(Acoustic/Bass)
- Erik Russell (Bass)

### Guitars

- Shane Gaglardi (Acoustic/  
Electric/Bass)
- Delia McDonald (Bass)

### Drums & Percussion

- Tom Ariss
- Tyler Bentley
- Nathan Buhler
- Greg Huff
- Marton Pandy



# CHAPTER FOURTEEN

## *The Invisible Thread*

TECH TEAM REPORT By Erik Russell



**T**he Renew Tech Team can be described as the “invisible thread” that holds our Sunday services together. While threads aren't flashy or the main focus of a garment, they are indispensable; they keep everything connected so that the whole can stand. When the audio, lighting, visuals, and cameras work smoothly, they fade into the background, helping to create a sacred space where the congregation can encounter Jesus and hear Scripture clearly without distraction. We don't serve for attention, but so that all

attention goes where it belongs: to Christ and His Word.

What our team accomplishes every week is a major feat. While most churches might pull off an on-location special event of this magnitude once or twice a year, the Renew Tech Team does it more than 50 times a year. Our serving day begins at 6:30 a.m., and by 7:00 a.m., we are at the theatre unloading almost 5,000 pounds of equipment. We show up through rain and snow, running over 1,000 feet

of cable and meticulously setting up the stage, lights, and cameras. It is a physically demanding role that requires intense logistical coordination and the ability to quickly solve complex problems under pressure.

Beyond our weekly Sunday rhythm, this team also provides the technical production for our church's special events, including retreats, community gatherings, and our annual Movies in the Park series. Whether we are in a movie theatre or an outdoor park, our goal





remains the same: to deliver excellence through every speaker and screen.

Our team currently consists of 28 dedicated individuals, ranging in age from 15 to 65. This intergenerational group is characterized by a remarkable faithfulness and a constant willingness to learn new things. Whether it is mastering a new piece of software, repairing equipment, or adapting to a last-minute change in the service flow, these men and women execute their roles with excellence. We are committed to this high standard not for our own sake, but because we believe this is what God deserves from us.

The unique challenges of being a church in a rented space fall heavily on this team, yet there is no resentment. Instead, our members are constantly stepping up, looking for

more efficient and effective ways to streamline our “setup and teardown” cycle. This year, we have focused on improving our technical rhythm and equipment maintenance to ensure that our operations are as strong and distraction-free as possible. This “behind-the-scenes” work is a tangible expression of our love for Christ and His Church.

I am constantly reminded of how blessed Renew is to have a team that gives so much of their time and energy so selflessly. From the TSU (Transport and Set-up) crew to the audio engineers, camera operators, and those running slides and lights, every role is vital. We take to heart the words of 1 Corinthians 12, recognizing that every member of the body is arranged exactly as God wants. This team is truly indispensable, and I am

honored to lead and serve alongside such a committed group of people.

As we look toward 2026, we remain dedicated to our craft and our calling. Our prayer is that God would continue to give us strength on those early mornings and peace under pressure. We trust that even as we move toward the hope of **A Home of Our Own**, our team will continue to grow in skill and unity, always working to ensure that the message of the Gospel is heard clearly by everyone who walks through our doors. 🙏



# 50+

*Sundays/year*

# 28

*dedicated team members*

*Ages*

# 15-65

# 1,000 ft.

*of cable*

# 5,000 lbs.

*of equipment*

# CHAPTER FIFTEEN

## Welcomed With Warmth,

FIRST IMPRESSIONS TEAM REPORT By Andy Tingchaleun



As with all of our ministries, the **First Impressions Team (FIT)** serves with dedication, teamwork, and genuine heart. Each week, visitors and regular attendees alike are welcomed with warmth, smiles, and intentional connection. Names are remembered, introductions are made, prayers are offered, and visitors are personally invited back. It is common to hear how much the welcoming culture at Renew has made a difference in someone's experience.

This year, over 50 visitors joined us, and many shared how meaningful those first moments of connection

### *Let's Do Breakfast*

were. Our outreach extends beyond the front doors through several key areas:

### **The Meal Ministry**

Led faithfully by Linda Welsh and a team that loves to serve both Renew and the Lord, this ministry has been a tremendous blessing.

### **Let's Do Breakfast**

Held most months, these mornings allow people to enjoy great food and, more importantly, rich fellowship.

### **The Coffee Team**

We are deeply thankful for this team, who faithfully provide caffeine each Sunday, including serving our worship and tech teams in the "green room."

### **Hospitality**

Donated home baking and cookies are always appreciated and enjoyed by many.

Looking ahead, having **A Home of Our Own** would create even more

opportunities for connection. With less focus on the logistics of setup and teardown, our teams could invest even more energy into people, and the Meal Ministry could once again host full fellowship lunches. We are thankful for everyone who serves so faithfully in helping Renew feel like home. 🌱



# CHAPTER SIXTEEN

## *At Home and Connected,*

INTEGRATION REPORT By Denise Gervais

**A**t Renew Church, helping people feel at home and connected is a core priority, and 2025 offered many opportunities to do just that. **Connection Point** remains our key introduction for visitors, sharing the story, vision, mission, and values of Renew. While seven people attended this session in 2025, God's work in helping people find their place extended far beyond these meetings. Nine individuals joined Renew Groups, deepening relationships and building meaningful community, while eighteen people committed to making Renew Church their home by becoming members. These milestones are reminders that God is always at work—even when the steps are small or gradual.

Integration is more than a series of events; it is about helping people belong. Through ongoing conversations, follow-ups, and invitations, we celebrate every story of someone stepping into the life of our church. Many who attend Connection

Point or join a Renew Group discover not only information but friendship, care, and a sense of purpose. Each connection contributes to the bigger story God is writing in and through Renew, shaping a church that is relational, welcoming, and mission-oriented.

Looking ahead, having **A Home of Our Own** would amplify these opportunities. Dedicated, on-site meeting spaces would allow for Connection Point sessions, Renew Group gatherings, and casual conversations to happen freely and naturally, without concerns about timing or logistics. This would enhance our ability to walk alongside visitors and members as they take next steps in their faith journey, fostering stronger community and belonging. As we continue to grow, we celebrate every person who is drawn into God's story at Renew and invite more to discover what it means to be part of this family. 🌱



**7** *Connection Point attendees*

**9** *individuals joined Renew Groups*

**18** *commitments as Renew Church members*

# CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

## Seeking God

PRAYER MINISTRY REPORT By Jakob Sawatsky



*Jakob & Kylie Sawatsky*

**I**n 2025, our goal was to cultivate a prayerful culture where seeking God becomes a natural instinct for our church family. We are grateful to see this vision taking root in three meaningful ways:

### **A Growing Hunger for Prayer**

In a complex world, we see our people turning to Jesus more readily. Prayer is shifting from a scheduled activity to a vital reliance on God, both personally and corporately.

### **Gradual, Heartfelt Growth**

Our team of ten welcomed a new member this year who reached out independently to join. This “quiet victory” shows that our church values and trusts the ministry of prayer.

### **Increased Visibility**

Through various initiatives, public prayer is becoming a shared and comfortable practice. A highlight was the Charis Alliance Global Prayer Walk, where we spent three weeks praying for 29 nations, reminding us that we are part of a global spiritual story.

## CONNECTING THROUGH PRAYER LOOKING AHEAD

On the first Sunday of each month, we gather for an hour before the service to pray for our leaders and ministries; everyone is welcome. Every Sunday, our team is also available in the Prayer Corner to offer care and hope. Throughout the week, our team stays connected via WhatsApp to lift up requests. In 2025, we saw a shift toward face-to-face requests, allowing us to build deeper relationships as we prayed for over 50 newcomers and those facing illness, grief, or job loss.

We are excited about the prospect of **A Home of Our Own**, which would provide a permanent and private Prayer Corner. Until then, we invite you to share your needs with us in person or online. We remain committed to persevering in prayer, confident that God is at work among us. 🙏



Submit your prayer requests to the Prayer Team on the Church Center app

# CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

## *The Walk Together*

COMPASS MENTORSHIP REPORT By Darcy & Vicki MacCallum



**I**n 2025, **Compass Mentorship** focused on forming relationships organically through **Mix events** and fellowship during Sunday services. While no formal new mentorship pairings were launched this year, several previous mentors, mentees, and accountability partners continued meeting faithfully—deepening existing relationships and providing ongoing support and encouragement.

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*Mentorship at Renew is about walking alongside one another in faith, learning from each other, and celebrating growth together.*

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These connections allow for deeper engagement with Scripture, prayer, and the practical application of biblical principles in everyday life. Whether formal or informal, these ongoing meetings provide a safe and intentional space for spiritual growth and mutual encouragement.

As we look ahead, we invite you to consider how you might share your journey with someone else or benefit from the wisdom of a mentor. Living God's story is always better when we walk together. 🌱



# CHAPTER NINETEEN

## *Courting Friendships*

RENEW CONNECT / PICKLEBALL REPORT By Derek Hounsell & Elizabeth Reda



The year 2025 for Renew Connect Pickleball was a year of growth, both in numbers and connections.

After meeting in elementary schools at the beginning of the year, we headed outside for the summer months with a mixture of Monday and Thursday evenings, with strong turnouts. We also had the opportunity to combine with our kids' summer park meet-ups, which created a nice family feel to the summer.

At the end of the summer, we held a social barbecue where we had a large number of people from the community attend along with Renew members. This was a great time to connect and get to know people better.

In the fall, we were able to move into Bishop Reding high school, which gave us a consistent location every Monday and doubled our courts from three to six. With the added space, we've seen our numbers increase to an average in the high-20s, sometimes reaching the mid-30s. We'll be meeting at Bishop Reding for the remainder of the school year and already have a permit request submitted for the following year.

Along with the increase in numbers, we have seen an increase in connections. Friendships are being formed, and now people are also meeting up away from the court. Our group is quickly becoming known as "the friendly pickleball group". This has resulted in people from the community also inviting

*Summer social BBQ*

their friends. It isn't uncommon for us to hear any given week, "\_\_\_\_ told me about this group and how nice you are."

Even more encouraging is that these pickleball connections have resulted in people coming out on Sunday mornings, and growing their relationships among our people. We continue to pray that these connections will grow and lead to Christ. 🌿

# CHAPTER TWENTY

## *Woven Together*

RENEW KNITS REPORT By Laura Wolf-Powell



*While creativity brings us together, the true heart of this group lies in the relationships formed around the table. If you are interested in joining us, we would love to see you there!*



**R**enew Knits is a ministry where women gather to create, connect, and serve every Thursday morning from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Renew Church office. These weekly meetings are always filled with plenty of chatter and laughter!

Whether you are a beginner looking for help or a seasoned pro ready to offer support, you will find encouragement, meaningful conversation, and the joy of giving back. While we all work on our own personal projects, we have also continued our beloved tradition of knitting sweaters for the new babies in our church family. We have been working hard to finish these gifts for the many little ones born in 2025! 💧



# CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

## *A Summer of Service*

SUMMER INTERN REPORT By Elizabeth Reda

Through the Canada Summer Jobs program, Renew Church received funding once again for the summer of 2025. Our goal for the internship was to provide opportunities for involvement across various areas of our church, allowing our interns to work closely alongside staff and ministry leaders.

Our interns, **Julia Harris** and **Ethan Young**, approached every task with creativity and a collaborative attitude. Throughout the summer, they ran the Renew Kids program on Sundays. They utilized **The Gospel Project** curriculum in July and led the children through the story of Noah in August using a Vacation Bible School program provided by our Children's Ministry Director, Inge Limanseputro. To create an engaging experience, the interns filmed weekly skits, planned games and crafts, and coordinated snacks.

The interns also hosted a midweek hangout at Milton Community Sports Park for our Renew Kids and Ignite Youth students. These weekly gatherings provided a consistent connection point during the summer months when regular ministries meet less frequently.

As a staff team, we were encouraged by the initiative shown by our interns when they volunteered to provide childcare for parents attending our weekly **Renew Connect** pickleball evenings. This created a



*Julia Harris leading dances at Movies in the Park*



*Ethan Young & Ignite Youth at summer park nights*

welcoming opportunity for more families to join in, knowing their children were being supervised on the playground by trusted leaders.

Finally, our interns played a vital role in the success of **Movies in the Park**. From distributing promotional flyers in the Milton community to preparing popcorn and managing the transport and setup of equipment, their leadership helped these events run smoothly. We are so grateful for their hard work and the way they helped us live God's story this summer! 💧



*Noah (AKA Ethan) getting ready for Renew Kids*

# CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

## *The Story We Shared,*

2025 EVENTS AT RENEW CHURCH By Emma Leonard & Barb Mainguy



It has been another wonderful year of planning events for both our community and our church family. In 2025, we hosted more events than the previous year, and we continue to trust God's work as we engage with the people of Milton.

### COUPLES' RETREAT



Our **Couples' Retreat** kicked off the year in February. We headed to Niagara-on-the-Lake for great discussions, insights, and plenty of laughs among couples at all stages of the "amazing race" of marriage.

### CRAFT & CONNECT



Our **Easter Craft and Connect** event at the Milton Fairgrounds on Good Friday was a busy, messy, and colourful morning in all the best ways! Forty children and their families joined us for crafts and cookie decorating.



Similarly, our **Christmas Craft and Connect** took place in early December at the Milton Sports Centre. Creativity was on full display as we decorated gingerbread houses and met new friends. We love hosting these events as they provide a special opportunity to engage with young families in our community.



## WOMEN'S RETREAT

The Women's Retreat was a refreshing weekend of worship, campfire conversations, and exploring the streets of Guelph. It was a time to pursue purpose together through laughter, friendship, and great food.



*We also loved showing our appreciation for the moms and dads at Renew on Mother's and Father's Day with special treats and breakfast sandwiches.*



## SUMMER SPORTING EVENTS



On July 4th, our largest group yet headed into Toronto to cheer on the **Blue Jays**. We even made it onto the Jumbotron to support our (eventual!) World Series-bound team. The following day, the **4th Annual Mitch van Rassel Golf Tournament** was held at Turtle Creek Golf Club. Organized by Andy Hardy, 42 golfers gathered to play in Mitch's memory. We were especially moved to have Mitch's daughter, Michelle, join us for the first time; she was profoundly touched by this tradition created in her father's honour.



## MOVIES IN THE PARK



**Movies in the Park** has become a highly anticipated summer tradition in Milton. We were thrilled to receive permission to expand to four screenings this year, with hundreds of neighbours turning out each night. Our summer interns and volunteers showed incredible leadership and initiative in making these evenings happen.



# HARVEST PARTY

The **Harvest Party** continues to be an annual highlight—a welcoming space for friends and neighbours to experience our church family in action. We enjoyed old-fashioned games like potato sack races and even tried our hand at square dancing! The smoked BBQ and delicious desserts in the barn rounded out a perfect afternoon of fellowship.



# TRUNK OR TREAT



**Trunk or Treat** was another display of amazing creativity and generosity as we welcomed the Milton community to trick-or-treat among the decorated cars.



# MEN'S ADVANCE

Later in the season, 37 men were “All In” at the **Men’s Advance**. This will go down as one of our richest times together, marked by honest conversations and deep communion.



# Looking Ahead,

We are excited to welcome an Assist Adventure Team in August 2026 to help us serve Milton through various activities. We invite you to join in! We reflect with gratitude on a year of friendship and outreach as we faithfully live God’s bigger story together. 🌱



*Couples' Retreat*



*Easter Craft & Connect*



*Mitch Van Rassel Memorial Golf Tournament*



*Trunk or Treat*



*5202 Fall of Women's Retreat*



*Harvest Party*



*Men's Advance*



*Movies in the Park*



*Christmas Craft & Connect*



*“We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord,  
his power, and the wonders he has done.”*

PSALM 78:4





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