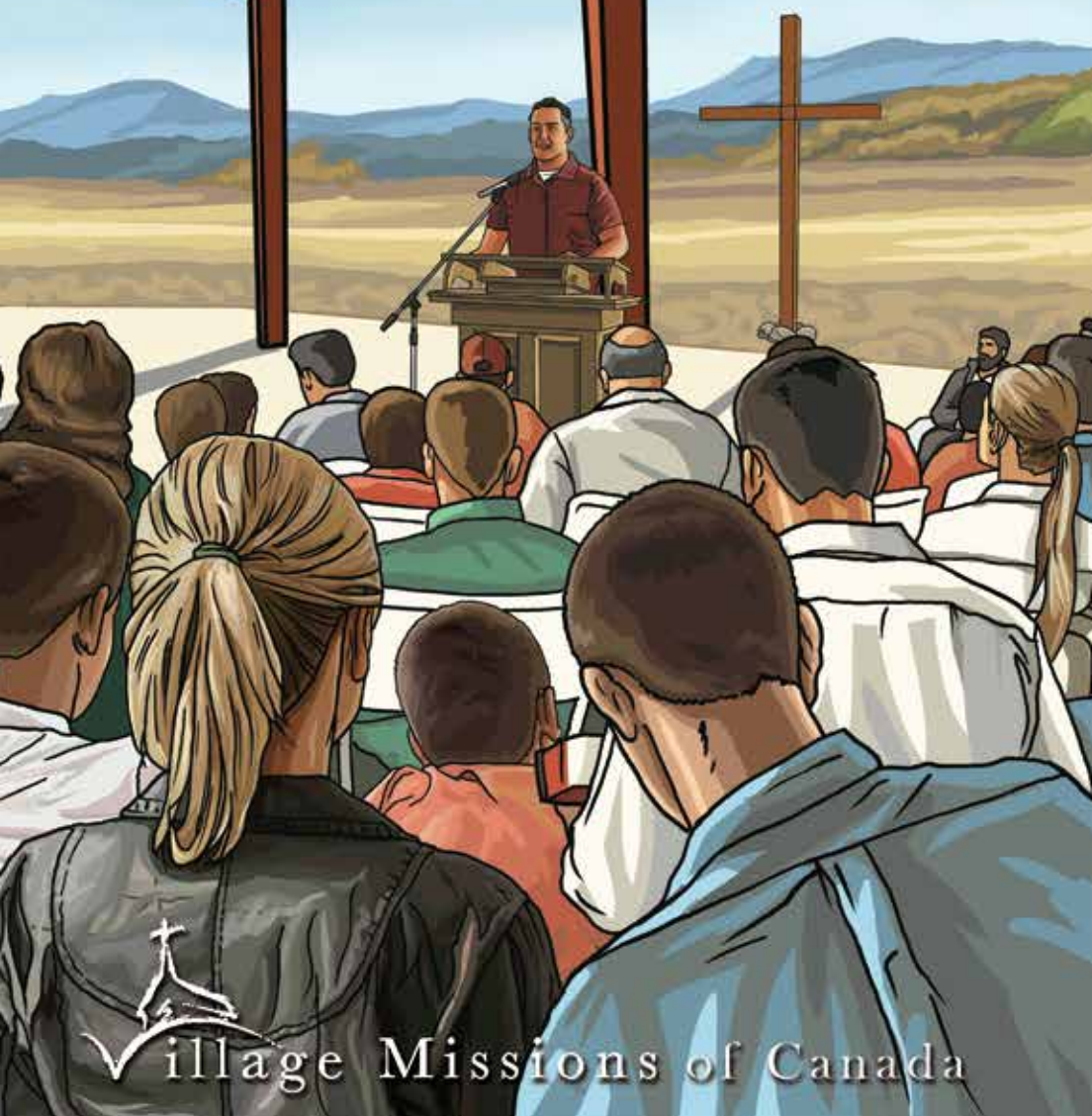


Canada: [villagemissions.ca](http://villagemissions.ca) USA: [www.villagemissions.org](http://www.villagemissions.org)

# COUNTRY *Matters*





## A View From the Country

with Murray Graham, Executive Director

During the height of the pandemic, we used the term “uncharted waters” and talked about the church “shining for Jesus.” We can now look back and say that many churches shone brightly during our time in uncharted waters. Despite many challenges and much uncertainty, our missionaries continued to preach the Word and point people to Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Despite restrictions and lockdowns, our missionaries found ways to love the people and remind them they are not alone.

The following pages bring you stories from four Village Missions churches. The churches are in very different areas of North America, but over the last 18 months each of them experienced God’s provision and blessing in surprising ways.

On another note, this year VM Canada also experienced God’s provision through the We ❤️ Village Missions 2021 Fundraising Campaign, as you will see from the update on the next page.

I pray that you will be encouraged as you read about the surprising ways God is working, and I eagerly anticipate how God will continue to build His kingdom through ministry partners like you.

Serving our Savior together,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Murray Graham".

Murray Graham, Executive Director



This campaign was launched with our first online auction from June 1-15. About 50 items were donated, and many people participated in the auction. We have also received individual gifts for this campaign. To date, the We ❤️ Village Missions campaign has raised \$25,280. THANK YOU very much to everyone who donated items to the auction, purchased items and gave generously to the cause!

Through the remainder of 2021 our goal is to raise a total of \$100,000 to help keep the light of the gospel in over 30 rural communities.

Would you prayerfully consider partnering with us to continue to provide the gospel to rural Canada?

To meet our goals, would you consider giving a ONE-TIME gift of \$100, \$250, \$500 or more? Alternatively, you can extend your impact by becoming a MONTHLY ministry partner with a regular gift of \$50, \$100 or more!

#### WAYS TO GIVE:

- Online by credit card ([www.villagemissions.ca](http://www.villagemissions.ca))
- Pre-authorized debit or e-transfers - contact our office 1-866-885-3885 (toll free)
- By mail: Village Missions of Canada, PO Box 3400, Mission, BC V2V 4J5

We hope to resume our Village Missions Dinners in the fall. It would be wonderful to see many of you again and enjoy a meal together as we give you an update of how God is working in the fields where our missionary pastors are sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ.





## DAN AND CYNTHIA REAGAN STONYFORD COMMUNITY CHURCH STONYFORD, CA

Village Missionaries Dan and Cynthia Reagan arrived in Stonyford, California, with their children in August 2019. At that point, Stonyford Community Church was struggling and had few children. Together, Dan and the church board formulated a new purpose statement: Stonyford Community Church (SCC) exists to glorify God and make disciples.

Only months later, the Covid pandemic began. Like churches around the country, SCC suspended all activities and began meeting online. How could they achieve their purpose without meeting in person?



But God had plans for SCC. The weekly Bible study grew from 5 to 15 participants as they met on the parsonage lawn. Restrictions did allow a church service outside, and they met all summer under a 6x6 cattle shade. Dan and his children led the singing. People passing by noticed, and soon new families with children began to attend.

Anticipating that pandemic restrictions could continue into the autumn, Dan and the leaders started discussing options for cool, rainy days. A portable rodeo tent? Too expensive. A large carport? Too small to be helpful. Finally, they had the idea of erecting a pavilion. This would provide shelter for outdoor services for the duration of the pandemic and an open-air shelter for community activities.



In October, they broke ground for the pavilion. By Thanksgiving, it was nearly finished. With some portable propane heaters, the people of SCC could meet comfortably in this structure through the California winter.

*"[In this pandemic] God moved us out of our four walls and forced us to meet in a different way to reach people beyond those walls," Dan said. "A concrete floor and a metal roof gave us a gathering place open to the community. We can worship the Lord and proclaim the good news of Jesus – we found that this is all we needed. Our small church quickly doubled in size."*

They are achieving their purpose of glorifying God and making disciples.





## TERRY & JANE BASKIN GRINDROD GOSPEL CHURCH GRINDROD, BC

On Christmas Eve 2020, Village Missionary Terry Baskin preached from a make-shift platform outside Grindrod Gospel Church in British Columbia, Canada. Musicians stood inside and played their instruments in front of the windows, amplified by speakers. The whole village heard the carols.



Terry & another congregant led worship during one of their drive-in services.

The winter weather prevented further drive-in services, but Terry began using an FM radio transmitter in the spring. In March, the people of Grindrod Gospel Church parked around the church and listened to the service on their car radios, happy to see each other as they worshiped.

**TUNE  
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TO:  
95.5 FM**



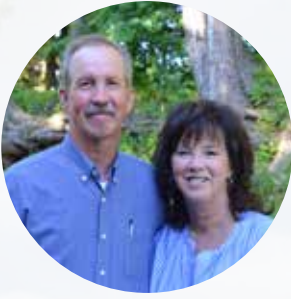
Psalm 68:19 was especially meaningful to Terry during the pandemic: *"Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with benefits—the God of our salvation"* (NKJV).

*Terry said, "In the moments when I felt overcome with the challenges facing us and all the privileges we had lost as a church, I thought of this verse and remembered how much God gives us each day. God also reminded me that any restrictions do not bind his Word and that He is still building His church through our Lord Jesus."*



Grindrod Gospel Church was able to hold Vacation Bible School (VBS) in the summer of 2021.





## DENNIS & LESLIE BURKE FAMILY BIBLE CHURCH AMSTERDAM, NY

One cold, windy Sunday in early spring 2020, cars pulled into the parking lot of Family Bible Church outside Amsterdam, New York and formed a semi-circle. Their Village Missionary, Dennis Burke, preached from a podium on the church's porch. At one point, the wind blew over the podium and carried the worship leader's music away, but the people continued worshipping.



### A parking lot service at Family Bible Church

Over the following months, about 30 people came each Sunday for these parking lot services. One time the worship leader walked from car to car with a cordless mike, inviting people to give a testimony to the Lord's work. Instead of loud amens, the congregation responded to each speaker by honking their car horns.

*"It was spontaneous and beautiful," Dennis said.*

Many churches in the area completely shut down, so





Dennis Burke preaches from the steps of Family Bible Church.

people from those churches came to FBC services. One day the neighbors across the street set up lawn chairs and listened. People who didn't come to church sometimes stopped by to talk. Two weeks ago, a 12-yr-old girl stood and told everyone that the church had helped her family come back together and how happy she is to be coming to church.

*"The Lord grew our church during the pandemic. We had to do things differently, but the Lord blessed whatever we were doing."*





## ALAN & BONNIE KLEIN FREEDOM BIBLE CHURCH SUTHERLAND'S RIVER, NS

Freedom Bible Church is a church of about 35 people in Sutherland's River in Nova Scotia, Canada. Village Missionaries Alan and Bonnie Klein have served there for 15 years.



**Joel Mantel & family**

In 2019 God brought Joel Mantel, a videographer, and his family to the church. Alan and Joel occasionally discussed livestreaming the church service. Little did they know it would soon be necessary!

When the Covid pandemic began, Nova Scotia shut things down quickly. The Kleins tried to livestream their service, but their Internet was too slow. Then Alan turned to Joel. Each week Alan recorded the service onto a memory card. Joel, or his wife Angela, edited the video and uploaded it to the church's Facebook page.





Alan Klein prepares to stream his church service this April.

For several years, Alan had been working to improve their church's Facebook page and make it more effective. During Covid, 1,200 people saw the recording of their 2020 Easter service! Each week Alan was surprised by some who watched their service. "People who don't go to church were watching our service," he said.

Anne is one example. She knew of Freedom Bible Church from a friend but hadn't attended. With online services, Anne began tuning in. She contacted the Kleins and visited with them in their backyard. Sitting under their apple tree, Anne told them about her struggles and said she wanted to make some changes. They told her about the hope and healing found in Jesus. Anne accepted the Lord that day.

Village missionaries and the churches they serve were beacons of life and hope during the dark days of the pandemic. They faithfully and creatively ministered, and God was pleased to use them for His purposes. Let us join the Psalmist in proclaiming "You make me glad by your deeds, O LORD; I sing for joy at the works of your hands" (Psalm 92:4).

The events of 2020 did not surprise God, but the ways He has been working through it have surprised us! From British Columbia to Nova Scotia and New York to California, our Village Missionaries have been creative and faithful. Even as we celebrate God's creativity through Village Missions



Canadian Centre for  
Christian Charities  
*ACCREDITED MEMBER*

fields, we can lift our eyes to see those who have yet to respond to Christ.

Will you consider how God might have you partner with Village Missions in bringing the Good News to rural people who need Christ?

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Helping Country Churches Thrive