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# COUNTRY *Matters*



Village Missions of Canada



# A View From the Country

with Murray Graham, Executive Director



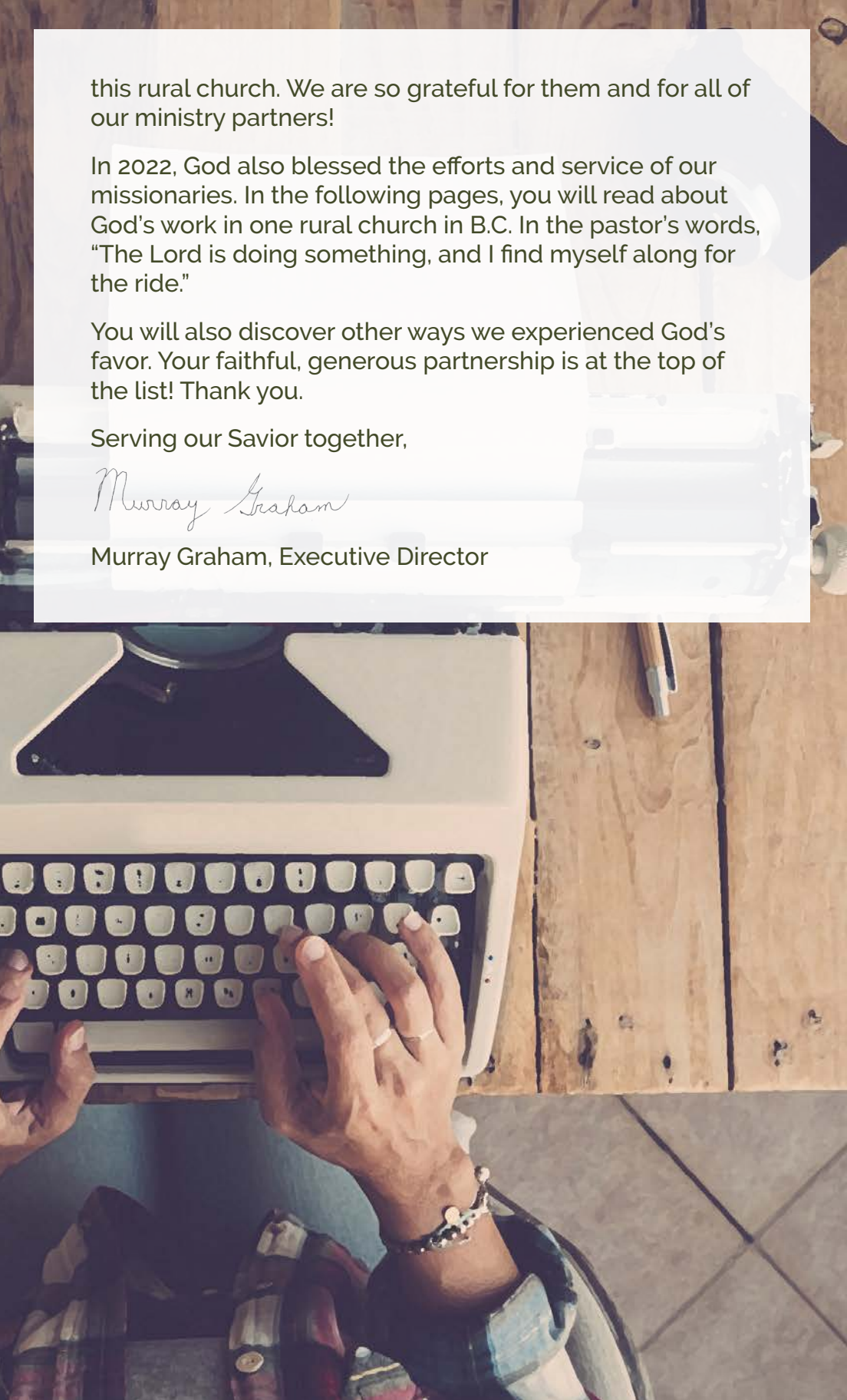
On September 11, 2022, Deb and I were at Bezanson Community Church in Alberta to join them in celebrating the church's 51st anniversary. I read aloud a letter Mr. Leland Snider wrote in 1970 asking Village Missions to send a missionary pastor to establish

a church there. From 1971-1990, four Village Missionaries served at Bezanson. Seeing this thriving church—and celebrating with them—was such a beautiful reminder of why Village Missions exists: to glorify Jesus Christ by developing spiritually vital churches in rural North America.

Village Missionaries haven't served at Bezanson since 1990, but our partnership with the church didn't end that year. Since then, Bezanson Community Church has faithfully given to VM so that other rural areas have a thriving church and Gospel presence. At our last VM banquet in Grand Prairie, folks from this church filled two tables.

Pastor Greg Clairmont said, ***"The Bezanson Community Church family is so grateful to VM for helping to establish the church and give it a firm foundation. We highly value what VM is doing."***

God has blessed the investment Village Missions made in

A top-down photograph of a person's hands typing on a vintage typewriter. The typewriter is a light beige color with a dark keyboard. The person's hands are positioned over the keyboard, with fingers pressing the keys. The person is wearing a plaid shirt and a silver bracelet on their left wrist. The typewriter is sitting on a wooden desk. The background is a light-colored wall.

this rural church. We are so grateful for them and for all of our ministry partners!

In 2022, God also blessed the efforts and service of our missionaries. In the following pages, you will read about God's work in one rural church in B.C. In the pastor's words, "The Lord is doing something, and I find myself along for the ride."

You will also discover other ways we experienced God's favor. Your faithful, generous partnership is at the top of the list! Thank you.

Serving our Savior together,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Murray Graham". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and elegant.

*Murray Graham*

Murray Graham, Executive Director



# THE WORK OF GOD IN A RURAL CHURCH



*The Marysville Community Church congregation (top); Village Missionary Joe Letourneau (right)*



In Marysville, B.C., missionary pastor Joe Letourneau encouraged the handful of people at Tuesday prayer time to pray that God would bring 5 new families to Marysville Community Church. They prayed for five new families who would be committed to the church and serving in it. The following week, two new families came. They returned the next Sunday, and two additional new families visited. The next month another family and two single women came through the doors.

Throughout the rest of the year, the church regularly welcomed new visitors. Some were invited by church members, one family came because their son met Pastor Joe's son, and others because they discovered MCC's website and online sermons. Some weeks nearly 50 people were participating in Sunday worship services.

Pastor Joe couldn't help recalling his first year in Marysville, when the average attendance was fewer than 20. Now, six years later, he reflected, *"The Lord is doing something, and I find myself along for the ride. Visitors are coming. People are asking about baptism. Many are growing spiritually and wanting more of God's Word."*

One Sunday, four of the new couples asked about membership and how they could serve in the church. It was a

big answer to prayer! In addition to organizing a membership class, Pastor Joe started a sermon series inspired by the book "I am a Church Member" by Thom Rainer.

People stepped up to serve in the church by cleaning the building, maintaining the church grounds, or helping to lead worship. The weekly offering reached a level where the church could take on more of the pastor's salary. Ten people became members, and three joined the church board.

Of course, the year wasn't without discouragements and the challenges that come with change. Some people left or drifted away. But Marysville Community Church is showing all the signs of a thriving church. We praise God!

Thank you for partnering with Village Missions to help churches like this one thrive and reach their communities with the Gospel of Jesus Christ! Please pray for the 26 rural churches where Village Missionaries are serving.



*Joe Letourneau (center, with his son) and wife Laura (far right) enjoyed a regional Village Missionary retreat.*

# CONNECTING AS A VILLAGE MISSIONS FAMILY

Missionaries need each other. They need opportunities to be fed from God's Word. A safe space to talk about rural ministry with people who understand. To rejoice over victories, weep over heartaches, and pray for each other. That's why the District Representatives organize regional get-togethers, and why we hold an annual conference.



## East & West District— Gary & Patsy Semenyna

**January:** Three missionary families came to our home. We played games, ice skated, and enjoyed meals together. We laughed and joked. We discussed theology. The day was a great time of fun and fellowship!

**August:** Five missionary families came to the VM Campout at Premier Lake Campground, about 30 minutes from Wasa Lake, B.C. We had a good time talking around the campfire, hiking and swimming, and we learned from each other as each pastor shared a devotional message.

## Prairie Provinces District—Gordon & Val Rowland

In Alberta, several Village Missionary families live close enough that we can meet for a day of fellowship and support every couple months.

In September, six missionary couples, the Grahams and my wife and I gathered in Ryley. We had a great time of visiting and laughter over lunch. In November, six missionary couples met at Meadowbrook Church near Lacombe.

Our regional get-togethers are an important way for us to learn from each other and encourage each other. Missionaries share their



burdens and their joys. There is always lots of laughter, sometimes tears, and plenty of support and encouragement.

## All Together at Conference

In June, Village Missionaries from across the country reconnected at Green Bay Bible Camp for our first conference in three years. It was such an exciting week for us! We laughed, prayed, and worshiped God together. Clint Heigh, a former Village Missionary, challenged and encouraged us from God's Word. For some missionary families, the conference is their only chance to spend time with fellow missionaries. This week is also a highlight for VM kids because they enjoy being with peers who understand the unique challenges of being a pastor's kid.



Tyler & Candis Moll (Gull Lake, SK):  
*"The conference truly was a few days of rich blessings and renewal that was much needed. We had a great time connecting with new and older fellow Village Missionaries. We were grateful to hear their stories of God's blessings along with the tougher things in ministry. The presentation of God's Word was inspiring and inviting."*



# MISSIONARIES TO A NEW FIELD: DELIA, AB



Delia is a village at the base of the Hand Hills in southern Alberta. Most of the residents are retirees, but many families live and farm outside the town. When Delia Christian Fellowship contacted Village Missions in 2022, they had been without a pastor since 2016. In September, they welcomed Village Missionaries Isaac & Esther Lee with their son.

Delia has one other church, but it doesn't have a pastor or regular services. Within a couple days of the Lees' arrival, people were greeting Isaac with the words, "Hi, pastor!" He enjoys dropping by the coffee shop and attending town events. Delia is small—less than 200 people live in the village—but it has an excellent k-12 school with 150 students. Delia Christian Fellowship is small, too, but the church family has persevered, and now they have a full-time pastor! Isaac and Esther are already planning a spring youth retreat for the children in the church and their friends. Please pray for the Lees and for Delia Christian Fellowship.



## LOOKING FOR NEW MISSIONARIES

We rejoice that Bible colleges opened their campuses to our District Representatives once again! Gary Semenyna and Gordon Rowland participated in missions conferences, spoke in chapel services, and interacted with students at the following colleges:

- ◇ Word of Life College near Owen Sound, ON
- ◇ Peace River Bible Institute in Sexsmith, AB
- ◇ Millar College of the Bible—three campuses in Winnipeg, MB; Salmon Arm, BC; and Pamburn, SK
- ◇ Nipawin Bible College in Nipawin, SK
- ◇ Prairie College in Three Hills, AB

Please pray that God would raise up new Village Missionaries from among these students.

Do you know someone interested in rural ministry?



## Meet A MINISTRY PARTNER

Several Christian Women's Clubs in Saskatchewan are partnering with Village Missions again.

In the 1970s, Karen Totten was invited to a Christian Women's Club (CWC) in Regina by a fellow high school teacher. Through the club, Karen came to know the Lord Jesus. The club is also where she first heard about Village Missions, which CWC supported for many years. Karen continued to be involved in CWC for the next several decades.

After a hiatus of some years, the clubs in Saskatchewan started planning to resume in 2021. In Canada, CWC had a new name—RSVP Ministries—but the same vision: “to invite women into a relationship with Jesus Christ, inspire them to grow, and encourage them to invest generously in the lives of others.” The clubs in Saskatchewan wanted a project. Karen contacted VM and met with Murray & Deb Graham.

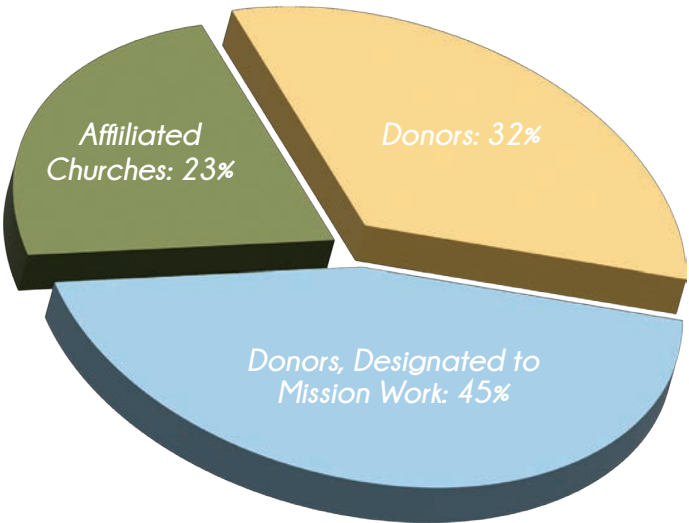
In January 2023, Village Missionary Jenneke Schnee attended three CWC events in Fort Qu'Appelle and Regina and presented the work of VM. The women responded with excitement and generosity. *“I was amazed when two clubs sent Village Missions gifts totaling over 1300 dollars!”* Karen said.

In November 2022, Karen joined the VM board of directors. She is passionate about helping rural churches thrive.



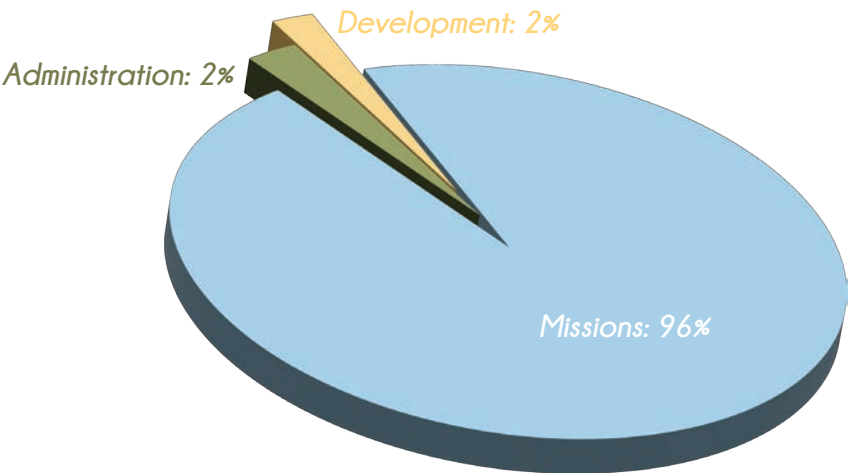
**Income by Source**

**\$1,138,015**



**Operating Expenses**

**\$1,229,637**



REVENUE BY SOURCE	2022		2021	
Donors	\$363,349	32%	\$303,780	25%
Donors (designated to mission work)	512,029	45%	529,237	44%
Affiliated Churches	262,637	23%	293,831	24%
Other Revenue	0	0%	89,510	7%
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$1,138,015</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$1,216,358</b>	<b>100%</b>
EXPENSES	2022		2021	
Missions	1,170,729	96%	1,056,141	95%
Administration	30,678	2%	34,411	3%
Development	28,230	2%	26,771	2%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$1,229,637</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$1,117,323</b>	<b>100%</b>
Excess (Deficiency ) of Revenue over Expenses	(\$91,622)		\$99,035	
FUND BALANCES				
	2022		2021	
<b>Beginning of Year</b>	<b>\$511,925</b>		<b>\$412,890</b>	
<b>End of Year</b>	<b>\$420,303</b>		<b>\$511,925</b>	

## VM BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Chairman Lee Gregory, Ernie Munchinsky, Richard Semenyna, Karen Totten, Vice-chairman (former Village Missionary) Hal York




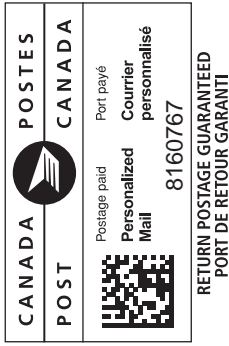
Village Missions of Canada is eager to see what God will do this year! Would you like to be part of it? This work is the Lord's. Village Missionaries and ministry partners are the tools He uses. Are you willing to be a tool in God's hands to help rural churches thrive

and point people to Jesus? Perhaps you feel called to be a missionary pastor. We'd love to talk with you! Or perhaps you feel led to give from your resources so that a rural church has a full-time missionary pastor. Please visit our website or call us.



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Helping Country Churches Thrive