



ELORA ROAD
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Ignite

A WORK OF GOD

Community - Unity - Synergy

A GIVING CAMPAIGN

Presented by the ERCF Pastoral Advisors
and the Board of Directors

5696 Wellington Road 7, Guelph, ON N1H 6J2

www.ercf.ca

ERCF Mission and Vision

Our Mission statement answers the question:

Why do we exist?

The mission may not change throughout our life as a church family.

Our MISSION

*expressing the unconditional love of Jesus
to everyone*

Our Vision statement answers the question:

Where are we going in the future?

Our vision will be refreshed every few years based on the
direction
of the Lord is leading us.

Our VISION

*grow in faith and love, and bring hope
to our community*

IGNITE is about both *Buildings* and *Builders!*

- **Buildings** represent the physical tools needed for ministry and serving people! Yes, this includes the actual facilities—but also the many types of equipment, software, tools, mechanical systems, and infrastructure needed.
- **Builders** represent the engine moving all ministry forward: people! Our attention will be placed on our Leaders: amazing women and men committed to serve God and serve others to see the work of God at ERCF accomplished!



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Part 1: Vision for 2024 - 2026

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Pastor to Grow &
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1. Strengthening the Children and Youth Ministries of ERCF

Our focus will be on the growing and development of our volunteer leadership base for:

- First Look
- 252 Kids
- Wildlife
- Amplified

We recognize significant impact on our children and youth will be a natural consequence of investing in our leaders, providing:

- Vision for growth and life change in our kids and youth
- Clear on-ramps and training for volunteers
- Practical support and encouragement for leaders
- Maintenance of high-trust relationships among all leaders

We will prioritize investment in the development of necessary resources to equip these leaders.

Additionally, having engaging spaces for Kids and Youth ministries to accomplish impacting ministry needs our prayerful consideration! Anticipating and planning for significant impact will result in substantial growth!

We will develop a plan now that will carry forward to the end of 2025—as God provides!

Our goals:

- To improve our Youth, Kids Church, and Nursery Spaces
- Equip and decorate to enhance engagement so children will be drawn in
- Provide needed A/V upgrades for Youth and Kids church

2. Strengthening ERCF's Unique Ministries

We are blessed to have been given influence (big and small!) in areas others have not! We are revisiting the significance and the opportunity these unique areas of service bring us:

a) **Elora Road Christian School (ERCS)**

No other churches in Centre Wellington—and very few in South-Western Ontario— have a Christian, elementary school like we do!

The need for Christian education—both in schools and in the families is more needed now than ever before!

Our culture is increasingly antagonistic to the Christian values we hold so dearly. Although the rural, conservative values of our area may delay the application of the anti-Christian and ungodly mandates of secular education - it is temporary! We need to wake up to the time we are living!

In the next year, we would like to see ERCS and ERCF partner in hosting/ launching a number of initiatives to serve all of the families of the Elora Road Christian Fellowship as well as all of the families of the Elora Road Christian School.

The end goal is that the school and church work in tandem to enrich the families of ERCS and ERCF—and perhaps the broader community— showcasing how ERCS and ERCF work together in a mutually-beneficial, synergistic relationship.

b) **Elora House (EH)** for Trafficked Women

- Additionally to fundraising, ERCF members can be more involved in the ministry of Elora House through prayer and practical investment in the lives of the graduates of the Stage 2 EH program:
 - After graduating from phase 2 of the Elora House, the girls begin Phase 3: re-integration into the community that encourages the freedom to

work, study, and interact in the community—while still maintaining a strong support network and coaching.

This will require:

- Availability of low-cost basement apartments (for example) for 2nd phase graduates who will be entering this 3rd phase
- Women or Couples to “adopt/ mentor” 3rd phase girls and make them a part of their lives. These women/couples act like sponsors who maintain weekly connection and encouragement to the girls.

c) **Support of Special Needs Families**

How wonderful to be able to serve Special Needs families who otherwise have minimal community support!

- ERCF hosts the annual Egg Hunt for families with children with special needs. We could host other events, and partner with other churches to do so!
- We have a few volunteers trained to serve special needs children as part of our Sunday Kids church: more are needed!
- The Board has done preliminary research into building a needed De-escalation/Sensory Room for children. This renovation would be a game-changer for these families.
- These initiatives will also allow Kids Church to better serve special needs families and children on Sundays.



3. Supporting Existing Ministries in Our Community: to promote personal freedom and robust mental health

a) **Endorsing Celebrate Recovery (CR)** CR Downtown is located in Guelph. We already have members and attenders who take advantage of the services of CR. (FYI: only 40% of people using CR have substance abuse issues...others have mental health and other addictive behaviours)

ERCF's goal is to come alongside this ministry that brings freedom to men and women who have lost hope and/or are crippled with mental health issues. We will:

- Align with the ministry in terms of promotion on our website, occasionally talk about the work of CR on a Sunday morning
- Make ERCF facilities available to: Host men's Bible Studies? Step programs? etc.

b) **Endorsing Crossways to Life (CTL)**

CTL is a Christ-centered, grace-based counseling service based out of Kitchener.

ERCF has had a number of members referred to CTL, and Pastor Jim sits on their Board. They are the ministry of choice when referring people for counselling services.

- ERCF has provided an office for a local CTL counselor in the church house —providing greater access for ERCF members
- We will host Grace Life Conferences (first one planned for November 2024) benefitting our own people and others who attend)

4. Hire an Executive Pastor to Grow and Manage the Church Organization

Why do we need an Executive Pastor now?

- This is part of the Lead Pastor succession plan—as we prepare for July 2026 when Pastor Jim and Carrie’s roles will change.
- This Executive Pastor position provides much-needed administration, systems oversight, and staff management that promotes church health and growth.
- Pastor Jim does not have expertise or capacity for this role. Carrie’s volunteer admin role will also be decreasing, making the need for a manager even more acute.
- To be clear, it is not intended that this hire becomes the Lead Pastor. (However, if God puts someone in place that becomes a perfect fit, we do not want to be stifling His will. God works in mysterious ways!)

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In Summary:

In 2024:

- Complete a Family Ministries Development Plan (Re: Kids Church and Youth Ministry), including strategies to improve the Kids Church and Nursery Spaces:
 - Make the Family Room space as engaging and functional as possible, with
 - Changing Interior Décor
 - Audio/Visual Upgrades
- Hire an Executive Pastor
- Renovate a space for a De-Escalation/Sensory Room

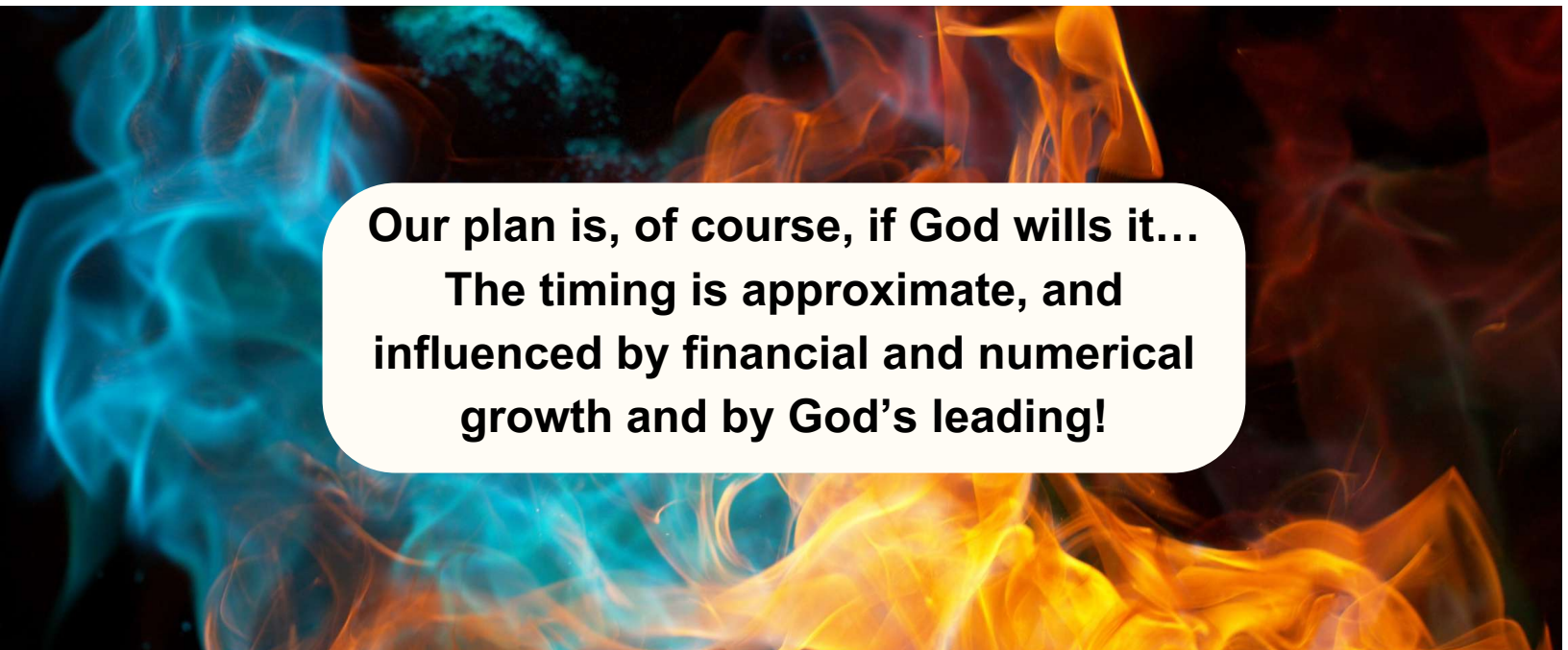
In 2025:

- Introduce systems and software to manage ministry and member growth
- Draft plans to renovate spaces for:
 - a Day-Care Facility
 - a Community Indoor Play Centre
- Review and Initiate building projects as growth permits

In 2026:

Major consideration will be:

- Staffing of the Family Ministries (Kids and Youth)
- Determining if we should build a separate School wing
 - This would free up space for Church ministry to happen on site during the week days. This major project requires the financial feasibility that comes with increased enrolment and a wider community impact.
- Implementing the next step of the Succession Plan for Pastor Jim



**Our plan is, of course, if God wills it...
The timing is approximate, and
influenced by financial and numerical
growth and by God's leading!**

Part 2: Giving and Investment as a Lifestyle

There are few topics as difficult to address as money and giving! Emotional landmines of misunderstanding, hypocrisy, and excess are everywhere:

- In many people's minds, money is the answer to their problems—and so, money becomes an *idol* (*what I think I need to be happy and without worry*).
- At the same time, examples of extremely rich televangelists taking advantage of people for personal gain turn us all off!

The fact remains that money can be a spiritual tool in our fight against:

- Consumerism
- Self-centered living, and
- The idolatry and wrong-thinking of trusting in our money

Biblical and balanced teaching about giving for Jesus' followers is urgently needed for us as we desire to honour God with everything—including our money.

As leaders in the church, we prayerfully endeavour to be sensitive to:

- those we are called to serve and disciple, those who call ERCF their home
- the changing community around us and—and those called to join our ERCF Family—and, most importantly, to
- the leading of the Holy Spirit!

God's work is not only *through* us to impact those around us with the power of the Gospel—but *must be in us* to bring deep and significant change as we pursue a life following Jesus.

Developing the character of Jesus by *responding* to His Spirit, *growing in our trust* of Jesus, and *living in Him* to allow the fruit of the Spirit to come to full maturity in us is the only way to:

- *love Jesus* with all our hearts and minds, and
- *love others* with His love flowing, practically through us

Practical Growth and Spiritual Formation

Without a doubt, how we deal with our finances becomes a major determination of growth and spiritual formation. *Why?*

Money is a key area where the Lordship of Jesus is practically applied! In fact, Jesus said handling money greatly impacts the condition of our heart.

Matthew 6:21 For where your treasure (wealth/money) is, there your heart will be also.

It's amazing! Jesus says there is a powerful connection between our treasure and our heart!

In Jewish Law from the Old Covenant, the people were commanded to give 10% of their income to God (to the local synagogue or temple) as a continual reminder that everything they had was actually God's—and the people were individual managers of what God bestowed on them.

Under Jesus' *New Covenant*, there is no "Tithing Law" required as a rule to follow. Believers have no amount we "owe to God". We are under grace—and everything is His!

We are, however, managers of all He has given us! The New Covenant teaching about money and giving is clear — (see 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, for example).

The Apostle Paul taught financial freedom—giving should be from the heart with no coercion or pressure. Giving cannot be forced; it should be a response to love we have received!

A Few Personal Notes from Pastor Jim:

1. Jesus is bringing the ERCF local church family into a new chapter!
Our goal is more than trying to raise a certain amount of money: our goal is to trust Jesus, individually, and as a church family with our finances—and invest in Kingdom work, local church work. We are pursuing faith-raising, not just fund-raising!

In our highly individualistic and consumer-oriented culture, we're told money

- brings happiness
- provides security
- is our source of freedom

To act against this tide of culture and invest in the Kingdom—and donate to a church—takes faith! The reason I give generously to the church is because I am building my life on what can never be taken from me! (see Matthew 6:20). In fact, I can say from personal experience that happiness, security, and freedom are by-products of living my life in Jesus!

2. In my personal experience, there were times over the years when life was financially difficult for Carrie and I—and, through those experiences, there were many lessons that had to be learned and I continue to need to learn.

I am not a great example of someone who is good at simply trusting Jesus for finances. God continues the process of building Jesus' character in me; and somehow my response to all of this results in me loving Jesus more!

I can look back and jump for joy at how God has been so good (even financially) to our family! Although percentage-giving is not expected, Carrie and I have always given at least 10% of our income. I only say this to let you know—I would not expect anything from anyone I was not practicing myself. I am all in!

3. Where is ERCF financially now?

- a. Background:

We operate a Church, a Christian School, and the Elora House [a safe house for survivors of sexual trafficking] totaling over 30 part-time/full-time employees.

Just over 2 years ago, coming out of COVID, we were looking at a budget deficit projection of \$180,000. This was as a result of significantly reduced attendance, reduced giving, as well as the need for a considerable HVAC upgrade.

We made significant and painful cuts and organizational changes. We gained bridge financing and reduced costs:

- We received a \$200,000 interest-free loan to be repaid within 3 years
- We eliminated 3 staff positions

Now, over 1 year later, our attendance continues to grow and donation trends are encouraging—getting us ready for our next chapter!

b. In terms of staffing, our financial needs look like this:

- With ERCF's ministry growing, the need for an Executive Pastor—an experienced manager and administrator, hopefully hired within a few months—is apparent.
- In approximately 2½ years, my role will begin transitioning towards being a part-time teaching pastor. Around that time, senior leaders will be looking (and praying!) for a new Lead Pastor.

Perhaps you are relatively new to ERCF. Be sure of this: God wants to use you! In fact, He is not only willing—He is excited about it!

Please anticipate and expect your involvement, your serving, your giving, and your encouragement of others are all a part of God's preferred future for you!



Part 2: The Ask

Over the last two years, we have drawn upon godly men and women who are consultants working with churches. Their analysis of our structure, staffing, and finances provided wisdom for our leaders in the decision making process along the way.

Our senior leaders (Board of Directors and Pastoral Advisors) are all of the same mind: now is the opportunity to work together, prayerfully and financially, and generously invest in ERCF over the next few years.

What are We Asking?

We are Requesting 3 Things of You

#1. Consider Giving Regularly

If you are not a regular giver, please consider becoming one!

As much as I don't enjoy talking about the spiritual discipline of giving money to the local church—I was recently reading (along with the Encore group, as a matter of fact!) from

Philippians 4:15-19

And you Philippians know that in the early days of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving except you alone.

For even in Thessalonica you sent gifts for my need several times. **Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the profit that is increasing to your account.**

But I have received everything in full, and I have an abundance. I am fully supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you provided—a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.

And my God will supply all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Like the Apostle Paul, I need to acknowledge that when you participate in this giving opportunity, *two different accounts are impacted* (v17):

- Yes, ERCF's bank account will increase
- Your heavenly account that is recording your investments in the Kingdom will increase too!

In the above passage, the Apostle Paul encourages the church that their financial gift to him (and his ministry) will result in a spiritual benefit to them from Jesus!

Thank You for Giving Regularly!

#2. Consider Giving a % of Income as an Expression of Trust:

Our culture teaches us to: spend, then save, and if anything is left over — then give.

Scripture reverses the order of priorities: give first, save, and then spend!

What should I give? Start where you can—perhaps a few percent of income (average giving among Christians in Canada is about 2%...).

When you give the first of your income to God (regardless of the %)—you are making a statement, and expression of trust in Jesus for all your finances!

As we trust God for our finances, His promises become more meaningful to us! As your trust in God, and experience of His faithfulness increases accordingly— you can increase your % giving—and your experience of Him!

- “My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:18).
- “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” (Matthew 6:33).

- On the first day of every week [on Sunday], each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper..." (1 Corinthians 16:2)
- "God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work." (2 Corinthians 9:8)

Thank You for Exercising Faith in Giving a Percentage of Your Income!

#3. Participate in our Special Offering on May 12, 2024

Using Jesus' example of feeding the multitude in John 6 (5000 men~ likely 15,000 minimally), the miraculous provision had 4 steps:

1	Know what you need.	Jesus had them all sit in groups to count everyone
2	Know what you have.	This part was embarrassing - only a young boys lunch!
3	Put what you have in Jesus hands	They gave what they had to Him
4	Pray and expect a miracle	Yay, Jesus!

This applies to us during our Giving Campaign:

1. What we need: The Leaders have engaged outside consultants to evaluate and assess and give us wisdom; in turn, we have prayed and agreed together what we need (indicated in our Vision, Part 1).
2. What we have (from the people's generosity!): We are humbly requesting everyone to pray and ask Jesus what He wants you to give, either:
 - a one-time gift, or
 - a pledge/commitment to give a certain amount over a 1.5 year period?

May we suggest you add up your donations over the year and calculate what % of your income you are already giving? Doing this helps us be accurate in our personal assessment of how much we give. We all want to be generous (and usually think we are). This calculation helps us know.

3. **Put what you have in Jesus' hands:** On Sunday, May 12 we are asking everyone to participate in a special time of giving by...
 - i. Giving your one-time extra gift and/or
 - ii. Indicating your pledge / commitment to give \$_____ over an 18-month period, bringing us to the end of 2025.
4. **Pray and expect a miracle.** With Jesus—like in the feeding of the 5,000—He plans for His followers to be part of the miracle process...
Please consider becoming part of our miracle!

Our Spiritual Goals:

- To reap the benefits of living a life investing in and seeking the Kingdom of God first.
- To learn that praying for our finances and needs reminds us of our dependency on God's provision.
- Experiencing the joy of seeing God work providentially in our finances as we trust Him by giving

Our Relational Goals:

- To experience a unity in the Family by working together in sharing the burden and carrying the Load to come alongside what God is doing in and through ERCF.
- To invest in the local church and experience our hearts becoming closer with others.

Our Financial Goals:

- We are believing God to provide an extra \$150,000 between May 2024 and the end of 2025--over and above our current giving.

Please consider a one-time gift, and/or a monthly pledge from May until the end of 2025. This is approximately an 18-month time period.

Thank You for Your Generosity at the Special Offering!

Use the enclosed IGNITE PLEDGE card (also available at The Hub) to indicate your commitment to our Ignite Giving Campaign. Pledge cards will be received on Sunday, May 12 during the Service (or at The Hub any Sunday in May 2024).



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Community.Unity.Synergy.

April 2024

"...Throw yourself into this work for Christ. Pass on what you heard from me--the whole congregation saying Amen!"
2 Timothy 2:1-2 (The Message)

PHASE 1: Builders & Buildings Goal of \$150,000

- Establish committed, generous givers
- Refocus on Kids and Youth
 - Engaging Family Room
 - change interior decor
 - a/v upgrades
 - Renovate space for de-escalation room
- Lawn tractor for property
- Finance an Executive Pastor

PHASE 2: Beyond \$150,000

- Eliminate \$100,000 personal loan
- Maintain and upgrade
 - Great Room a/v system
- Draft plans
 - Day care facility
 - Indoor play centre
 - Hire Family Pastor to oversee Kids and Youth ministries

Hand in your completed Pledge Form during the offering on Sunday, May 12 or at The Hub any Sunday in May 2024.

Ignite PLEDGE

Name: _____

Email: _____

Giving your email address allows ERCF to contact you regarding the Ignite Giving Campaign. We will not share or distribute your email address or information.

I pledge to give \$ _____ between now and December 2025. This is over and above my regular giving.

One-Time Payment of \$ _____

Monthly Payments of \$ _____

Other (specify) _____

2024 Board of Directors



Jon Goldberg
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Jelena Gordon
Vice-President



Lauren Garrison
Secretary



Don Speers
Treasurer



Glen Dippel
Director



Jeff Gordon
Director



Jeff Reinhart
Director



Sean Clarke
Director



Sheldon Morris
Advisor



Pastor Jim Gordon
Advisor/CEO

The Board of Directors is responsible for the legalities, finances, and facilities of ERCF, and works alongside the Pastoral Advisors, who are responsible for the spiritual health and ministry of the church. Together, these two bodies of leaders bring governance to our local church family.

2024 Pastoral Advisors



Paul Duimering



William Dolderman



John Martin
** Campaign Director