

CORNERSTONE of LAKEWOOD RANCH



ANNUAL

REPORT 2022

LOOKING BACK

ALL THINGS NEW
ALL THINGS NEW
ALL THINGS NEW
ALL THINGS NEW

INTRODUCTION

At times church “annual reports” can feel like congressional hearings where we only justify our expenditures. Of course we seek to be faithful stewards of the financial resources that the Lord has provided, but we also believe our annual reports should be a space where we take inventory of the previous year’s blessing of God’s grace. Our hope is that in doing so, we can remind ourselves throughout the year ahead of our calling to follow Jesus.

We hope that is what you experience as you review these pages.

The Session would like to take the opportunity now to thank the staff for the hard work they put in to make the 2022 year the joy that it was. It is so easy for us to forget how blessed we were last year given the distractions and frustrations of any given day. We enjoyed more opportunities for fellowship. We enjoyed being met by the warmth and friendliness of the Greeters and Ambassadors at our doors each Sunday morning. We enjoyed the intimacy of worshiping our God together through listening to Pastor Phil’s sermon series and the music of the worship team.

We marveled (and continue to do so) at the ways in which Cornerstone has passed on the Christian heritage to the next generations through our thriving Youth and Children’s Ministries. Our gatherings are able to run smoothly because of the behind-the-scenes efforts of the multiple volunteers who attend to the routine business of the church.

The Session expresses its thanks to its fellow laborers, the Deacons. The Session and the Diaconate meet each month so that they may share in the labor in a unified manner. Thank you, Deacons, for your example in cultivating compassion and mercy in our church.

The Session would also like to thank the members of Cornerstone. You have been faithful— not only in your volunteering and financial generosity, but also in making Cornerstone a place where the joy and love of God can be felt. Because of the environment you’ve helped cultivate, we are experiencing growth as the unchurched, de-churched, and faithful Christians are finding a new home at Cornerstone.

The Cornerstone of LWR Session

“we exist to follow Jesus in His mission of making all things new.”



COMMUNITY BUILDING



Fellowship Groups

This past year, many people in our congregation were able to connect and deepen friendships through our Fellowship Groups. Our Fellowship Groups have provided spaces where people can come and be known, whether they have been at Cornerstone for a long time or they are brand new. These groups have provided opportunities to connect such as brunch outings, gathering in each others' homes, meeting out for dinner, going to Popstroke etc. Most importantly, our groups have been committed to praying for each other.

We had over one hundred and fifty people (adults and children) participate in our four year-round groups. We also have a seasonal group that caters to those who call Cornerstone their part-time church home. These "landing spots" have made connecting with others much easier, and we hope that you will join a group so that you too can deepen your friendships and connections here at Cornerstone. Our goal this next year is to continue to provide spaces where people in the church can get together as well as form more groups to accommodate our growing congregation. Two of our groups in particular are getting very large and there will be a need to split them. Growth is a wonderful quality to have, but this means that we will need more facilitators who are able to oversee these new groups.

Taylor White, Pastoral Intern

Men's Bible Study

Our Men's Bible study has almost tripled in numbers since it first began a few years ago. Last year, we studied the book of Joshua as well as Nancy Guthrie's book "Better than Eden", a biblical theology from Genesis to Revelation that shows how the Bible's story shapes our story. This Bible study has edified the seasoned follower of Christ, as well as served as a great onramp for many who are new to our church and may be exploring the Bible for the first time. Thank you to David Holmes, an elder here at Cornerstone, for leading the men each week.

"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!"

Men's Golf

In April, Cornerstone hosted its first men's golf outing at Esplanade at Azario Lakewood Ranch. Twenty-eight golfers of various ages and skill levels participated in the team scramble event with the winning team of Joey Brannon, Ian Desmond, Scott Hase, and Joe Liscandro being inducted into the Cornerstone Champions Club. A fun day of fellowship, food, and Florida sunshine was enjoyed by all.



Newcomers Lunch

Every second Sunday of the month we offer a "Newcomers Lunch". The purpose of this lunch is to get to know those who are new to Cornerstone and to introduce them to who we are. If you attend one of these lunches, you will get to know some of the other new faces at Cornerstone before Pastor Phil gives a short history of the church and invites you to see how we serve Jesus in His mission of making all things new. Our Pastoral Intern Taylor White will then tell you about some of the opportunities for you to get involved in the church, such as our Fellowship Groups and Bible studies. Afterwards, there will be time for Q&A where Pastor Phil and Taylor will field any questions you may have about the church. All of this will take place in around an hour and is a great way for newcomers to decide if we are the right place for them to call home. Over the past six months, we have seen an average attendance of ten newcomers a month.

Summer '22

This past summer we introduced for the first time our SUMMER '22 events! Our hope was to invite our Cornerstone family to stay in community with each other during the summer and give them a place to escape the heat. We offered Biography classes where we covered C.S. Lewis, Matthew Henry and Elizabeth Scott Stan. On Wednesday mornings, we enjoyed coffee and brewing delicious pour overs together. We also opened our doors for "play-dates" so our littles could come out and play on our indoor playground. And of course the men loved getting together to enjoy fellowship and smoked meats at our Holy Smokes events. There was something for everyone! If you missed these events, be on the lookout for the SUMMER '23 events card at the New Steps Bar (NSB)!

COMMUNITY BUILDING
AT CORNERSTONE.



Women's Ministry

In 2022 our Women's Ministry began with a 12-week study on the book of Joshua. We dove into the history of God and began tracing the storyline of God's plan to dwell with and provide for his people. In the summer we joined with the men of our church as we learned three biographies and enjoyed fellowship together. Then in the fall of 22, we studied scripture from Genesis to Revelation with Nancy Guthrie's book "Better than Eden."

Women's Ministry Christmas

Our women's Christmas dinner culminated in 2022 with powerful, life-giving stories of our own women and songs of Christmas. As a community of women, we have welcomed many new friends into our groups this past year, we have studied the goodness of God, and we have learned about our place in the grand story. 30% of our guests were friends or family invited by our own Cornerstone women.

Women's Ministry in 2023

In this winter season, we are studying the book of Acts as we see God's plan and purpose for his church revealed, and how we in our present day are called to be a part of His mission.

Our desire as a women's ministry is to be an inviting place, where one can come study God's word for the first time without intimidation. We pray for those seasoned in studying God's word to have their eyes opened anew while going deeper into their love of God's word. The Women of Cornerstone continue to grow together in friendship. We are a beautiful mix of ages and stages of life, who have much to learn from one another, with the common pursuit of God uniting us.

becca woods
Women's Coordinator

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Spiritual formation—the shaping of a person's inner life after the pattern of Christ—is happening at Cornerstone in both large and small groups. In 2022, we had roughly 60 people involved in either Core Classes or discipleship groups, or both. This is the largest participation in intentional pathways to growth in the history of the church.

Our three, 6-week Core Classes introduce biblical story, doctrine, and spirituality, all of which are shaping emphases in the life and teaching of the church. Cornerstone's distinctive approach to the Bible is learned in these classes. That emphasis is then honed into core convictions for ministry in our 10-week summer Core Leadership course.

Comments

"It made me want to know and learn and love Christ more." J.K.

"The teaching is excellent and doctrinally sound" C.F.

"Classes are very accessible no matter where you are in your spiritual journey." K.F.

Intentional Discipleship is more intensive and personal than any class could offer. Small groups, called "Journey Groups" have been meeting weekly in the fall and spring to pursue Christ-following in a way that shapes us into disciples who can help others become mature and equipped Christ-followers. This "Life on Life" movement is growing slowly but surely here at Cornerstone.

Bill Martin

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:2



CORNERSTONE KIDS

For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.
Psalm 100:5

2022 Stats.

Kids actively attending 98
Adult volunteers 44
Youth volunteers 10
New Kids 1st time visitor 92

Our purpose here at Cornerstone is to follow Jesus Christ in His mission to make all things new. (Revelation 21:5) In the Children's Ministry, we join in that mission by sharing our love for God's Word with the kids. On Sunday mornings, the kids will read the Bible, pray, sing, do crafts, and play. Our teachers use these activities as opportunities to point them to Jesus and show that He is at the center of God's story of salvation. Our hope is to help you create opportunities at home for truth-filled, spiritual conversations through the material we send home (such as catechism review and memory verses). Every summer, we hold a week-long VBS (Vacation Bible School) for the kids where they learn about a specific concept about God through song, dance, and Scripture.

God is working to raise up the next generation, and we are blessed to be a part of God's mission.

Phillip Lawrence

In the nursery (ages 0-3), we are committed to offering a safe place where our youngest children will be introduced to the gospel. Our hope is to lay a solid foundation for them of who Jesus is and what He has to offer them. In the nurturing and stimulating environment we have cultivated, each child is known, valued, and loved. Scripture instructs us to "train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6) and we believe it is never too early to start!

Chelsey Desmond

Middle and high school are vital times in life where students are searching for their identity and longing to discern what they really believe. Our vision at Cornerstone is to create a space for our youth that feels like their own where they can come and learn the truths of Scripture in a safe (and fun!) environment.

We live out this vision through Wednesday night Youth Group, Sunday school, our monthly events, and winter and summer camps. During Wednesday night Youth Group, we play fun games and spend time connecting with each other. This is followed by singing worship songs together, listening to a message, and discussing that message in small groups. At Sunday school, we dive deeper into Scripture and theology so that we can help our students better understand the Word of God and grasp its rich beauty. Throughout the year, we hold events for our youth— everything from going to a trampoline park to getting messy with food wars. We also take our students to winter and summer camps so that they can get connected with each other on a deeper level by eating meals together, laughing with one another, and praying for each other. In this season of our students' lives, we want to make sure we give them the tools they need to learn theology, but also have plenty of space to be themselves in a loving, gospel-centered community.

It has been a blessing to work with the youth the past two years. Getting to watch them grow in their faith, their knowledge of the Bible, and their love for Christ has been a beautiful journey. I want to thank you all for giving me the opportunity to walk alongside our students. It has been a privilege to get to know them, hang out with them, and to study the Word of God together.

Grady Martin, Youth Director

I started volunteering with the youth on Wednesday nights in August 2021 and became a staff member in January 2022 where I got more involved by attending winter and summer camps, leading summer bible studies, and occasionally teaching Sunday school. I also get together weekly with the middle and high school girls to just hang out and get to know them whether getting coffee, having picnics, going to the mall, etc.

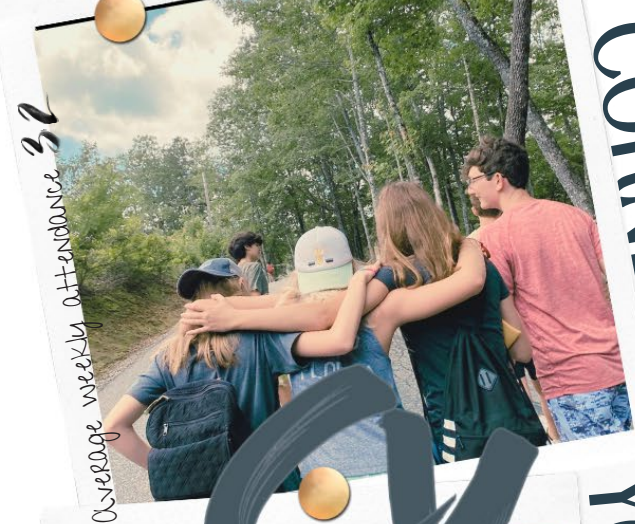
It's been incredible over the past year to see our youth really feel at home at youth group and to see them excited to invite their friends into that "home". Over the past year, they seem more open to asking questions and willing to wrestle through things that they might not understand or find difficult to reconcile with. Summer camp was especially pivotal to our kids' relationships with one another. Certain barriers that they may

have felt or experienced (whether because they attend different schools or otherwise) were able to be overcome by the shared experiences of being in cabins together, studying the Word together, and just living life alongside one another for a week.

It has been so encouraging to work with our youth this past year and a half. Teenagers are so often underestimated in terms of what they are thinking about, so to get to experience their insights about the Lord and witness the waves that they are making at school, in the church, or even at home for Christ is remarkable. I am grateful for the many ways the students have encouraged and challenged me in my own faith and thinking.

Isabelle Blanch
Youth Assistant

CORNERSTONE YOUTH



Average weekly attendance 32

Boy to Girl Ratio 6 to 5



MS & HS kids attending '22 winter & summer camp 45



"You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8)



MISSION TO THE RUSSIAN SPEAKING WORLD

MTRW (Mission to the Russian Speaking World) provides theological education for potential church planters and ministers among Russian-speaking people. Cornerstone currently covers the cost of an entire year of theological education for one student from Belarus at the ERSU (Evangelical Reformed Seminary of Ukraine).

COVENANT OF GRACE

Covenant of Grace, the first Russian Presbyterian Church in America, located in North Port, uniquely positioned to bring the gospel to immigrants from Eastern Europe. Pastor Aleksey preached here at Cornerstone last year.

NEWTOWN CONNECTION

The overall vision of Newtown Connection, in tandem with Boys & Girls Clubs of Sarasota, is to introduce a new and diverse group of youth to an after-school program centered on Sports, Health and Education. The major focuses of the program include sports, health and education, trauma recovery, and positive character trait development.

SEMINARY STUDENTS

Cornerstone is committed to equipping the local church with seminary trained men and women. It is a joy to support our very own Taylor White (Covenant Theological Seminary) and Rebecca Woods (Reformed Theological Seminary) as they pursue theological training while serving here at Cornerstone.

REFORMED UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP

Reformed University Fellowship (RUF) is a campus ministry that reaches college students from all backgrounds with the hope of Jesus Christ. College is a time when beliefs are explored, decisions are made, and lives are changed. We invite students into authentic relationships and the study of God's Word. Through the ministry of RUF, students discover the love of Christ, find their significance in God's redemptive story, and engage in the life of His church.

Cornerstone currently support ministries at Florida Gulf Coast University, University of South Florida and Samford University.

To read more about the campus ministers that we support, visit cornerstonelwr.org/missions-support/



Cups of coffee
consumed weekly!
Innumerable

2022 Stats.

Weekly Volunteers **102**

Average length of Sermon **yes**

Average Attendance **311**

a 30% increase from 2021

average weekly children's attendance **60**





"But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. ... For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." (Jer. 29:7 & 11)

As a church we want to be faithful to the people and to the place where God has called us to be salt and light. To bring peace, flourishing, and hope in the midst of uncertainty, fear, and darkness. As we look ahead, assessing our needs, resources and opportunities we are prayerfully considering finishing the final stage of our campus; a new sanctuary. A church is not solely defined by its building, nevertheless a building, like a home, helps us nurture our faith, experience love, and extend hospitalities to our neighbors.

Cornerstone of LWR FINANCES

Giving Generously

A vision for ministry involves a collective effort by all of us who consider Cornerstone to be home. That means that we are to faithfully and joyfully surrender the resources God has entrusted to each of us—as a response to His grace that calls upon us to give generously and from the heart, just as we have received from a lavishly loving God who, because he so loved the world, gave...

Planned Giving for 2023

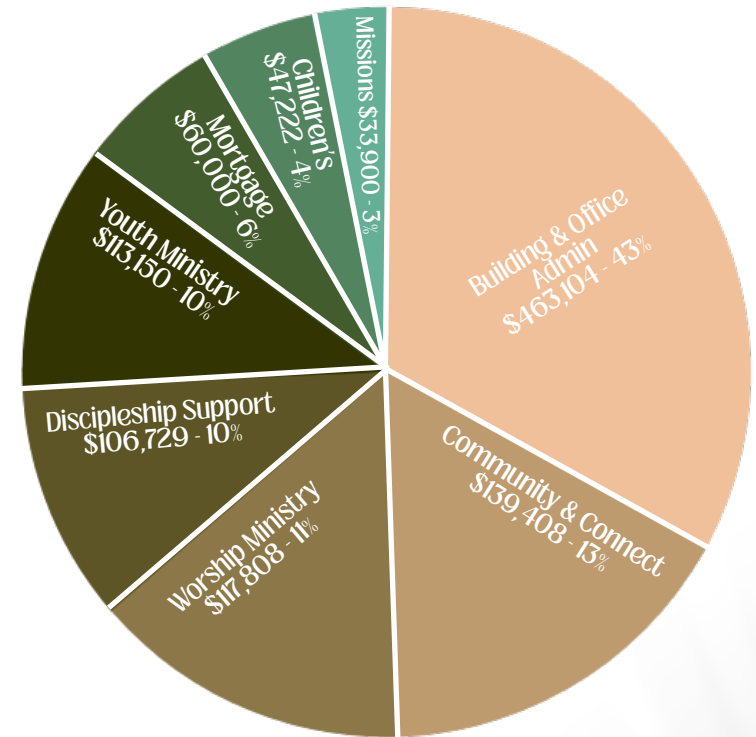
Thank you for those of you that have turned in your 2023 commitment cards. As a reminder, every commitment is an act of worship and an important part of our faith. Because it helps us plan for future ministry and set realistic goals. This commitment is not in addition to your regular offering, but it is your regular offering. It is not too late to turn in your card!

In 2022 we had 47 commitment cards turned in, totaling \$543,526.00. Our 2023 budget is \$1,081,321 and as of January 27th 2023, we have 42 commitment cards totaling \$514,463.00. We have committed almost 50% of our budget for the year!

Scan the QR to fill out
your commitment online!



2023 Budget



'Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come.'

1 CORINTHIANS 16:1

THE CALL TO ASSOCIATE PASTOR



BILL MARTIN, RULING ELDER, DIRECTOR OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION

In 2023, the Session plans to seek the congregations approval to expnd a call to Bill Martin as Associate Pastor. Bill's job description will stay the same but with the addition of Bill as Associate Pastor, we add to the pastoral care of the Cornerstone Congregation.

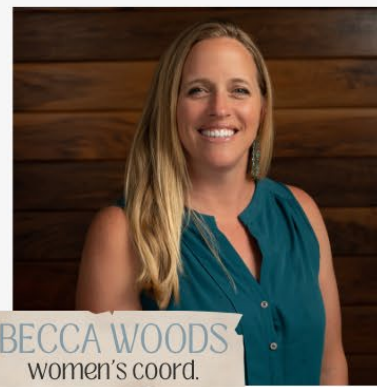
Bill Martin has been with Cornerstone since 1995, serving as an elder, leading worship and teaching adults. Bill's passion is to see Christian adults deepen and broaden their understanding of faith and the Christian life. He has taught courses and led seminars in Bible, theology, philosophy and contemporary issues. In 2002, Bill graduated with an M.A. from Reformed Theological Seminary. His full-time job is hosting "The Morning Cruise" on The JOY FM, along with Dave Cruse and Carmen Brown. Bill is married to Kimberly, and they have raised 5 children: Will, Madison, Adam, Grady and Payton. In additional, Bill & Kimberly have one grandchild, a sweet baby girl, Adelina, (Addie), who turned 1 in November. Bill also gets to work along side his son, Grady, Cornerstone's youth director.



PHIL WOODS
senior pastor



BILL MARTIN
spiritual formation



BECCA WOODS
women's coord.



HILARY NELSON
exec. administrator



TAYLOR WHITE
pastoral intern



CHELSEY DESMOND
nursery coordinator



PHILLIP LAWRENCE
children's director

Cornerstone of LWR Staff



CAM SCHLABBACH
worship director

Cam joined the Cornerstone team in April of 2022 as our part time worship Director. He is married to Katie, they have a daughter, Rosemary (Rosie), and are expecting a little girl in July



KATELYN PISA
admin. assistant



ISABELLE BLANCH
youth assistant



GRADY MARTIN
youth director



Advent in the Garden



Filming for Summer '22



Summer '22 Biography



women's CHRISTMAS



KIDS CHOIR



Sunday am worship



Christmas Party



Party on the Lawn



Easter



HS CAMP



MEN'S GOLF



staff planning

The Address

January 29, 2023

Dear Cornerstone of LWR,

As one who has been called loquacious, I hope my report to you is refreshing.

I want to start by saying thank you! Hyperbole aside, 2022 has been, by far, the most delightful year of ministry in my life. Thank you for the ways you have supported our family with your prayers and the grace you have shown me enduring my imperfections with gospel love.

This year's annual report serves as a way to share with you the wonderful ways God continues to bless our church, none of which happens apart from your faithful generosity and service.

I pray this report encourages you in your faith while preparing you to follow our Lord in the year ahead.

Pastor Philip Woods
Senior Pastor

