

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

A LETTER FROM BRANDON

When you're in your early forties like I am, a passing year accounts for a little over 2% of your life. If you think about it, that's not a terribly significant amount of time. For one of Elevation's Junior Youth, though, a year is closer to 10% of their life, while a child whose caregiver signs them in to the Toddler Room for the first time experiences a year as a whopping 50% of their little lifespan!

But what should we make of a year that passes in the life of a church like ours? Is a year a little amount of time or a lot?

Instead of crunching percentages, I think the significance of a year depends a lot on what actually happens between the 1st of January and the 31st of December. By those measures, 2018 sure felt like a long year, didn't it? But what about 2019?

When the calendar flipped to 2019, there were a lot of questions about what the next twelve months would hold. On the other side of some challenging conversations, we started the year off wondering just how long it would take for us to recover and what the final toll on our congregation would be.

The past year has been a season of recovering, rebuilding, and refocusing, and I think the proof of how far we've come is that, by the fall, we were already introducing creative new initiatives like *Neighbours!* groups and a *Slow Kingdom Coming* community book study. By the end of the year, most of our lingering questions had been resolved and we were already starting to cast a vision for the road ahead.

To be perfectly honest, I wouldn't have thought we'd be in this position so soon, so a big thanks to everyone who has been so supportive and faithful throughout this leg of our journey. And for those who have joined us recently and barely know what I'm talking about: *We're so glad you found us!*

As you read through this report and as we gather together for our Annual Meeting to talk about things we don't usually talk about on Sunday mornings, it's my hope that you will be encouraged by what is happening around Elevation and that you will be inspired to be part of this important next stage of our community's life together.

Grateful to be serving alongside you all,

Brandon Malo

2019 AT A GLANCE

JANUARY

- Retreat at Hidden Acres around the theme of “Reflections”
- Weekly *Scripture Studies* began, led by various members of our community

FEBRUARY

- Mindful Mondays: evenings reflecting on topics related to spirituality and mental health

MARCH

- Hot Date Night; a longstanding tradition at Elevation celebrating relationships
- Sharon Leage (our Family & Children’s Ministry Director) announced her resignation and a search began for her replacement; Susan Fish stepped up to volunteer in the role!

APRIL

- Good Friday service with Trillium, followed by an Easter morning pancake breakfast and kids’ egg hunt before our Easter Sunday service
- The Gahu Project joined us as guest musicians

MAY

- Christin Taylor spoke about her experience at the Mexican border

JUNE

- Annual spring picnic with Trillium
- First Communion with ten of our Grade One students
- New-ish lunch for newcomers to Elevation

JULY

- Sharon Leage moved out of her staff role after an exciting week of VBS
- ‘Long weekend’ picnic in the courtyard
- Dedications of **Naomi Grace** and **Halley Martin**

AUGUST

- Long weekend picnic

SEPTEMBER

- Baptism of **Trenton LeFeuvere, Emily Mak-Fan, Jude Malo, and Josephine Sun**
- Inaugural Men's Breakfast
- Dedication of **Caylee Leveille, Emma Leisegang, Scarlett Melchin, and Simon Schmidtke**

OCTOBER

- Ride for Refuge and raised **\$39,530.00!**
- Book study on **Slow Kingdom Coming**
- Our mission partners, TK and Nikki, visited from Ghana
- Dedication of **Joey Young**
- Monthly Kids' Church service began in the Gym

NOVEMBER

- **Eli Gingerich** and **Brenda Prins** stepped onto the Steering Committee, and we said farewell to **Karl Gingerich** as he and Mary moved to Ridgetown, ON
- *Neighbours!* initiative began
- Annual Women's Breakfast and Craft Sale
- Dedication of **Ingrid Ruck**

DECEMBER

- We cancelled church! (due to freezing rain)
- Annual **Stockings for Bolivia** fundraiser in support of Bolivian Children Foundation
- Evening worship service
- Joint Christmas Eve service with Trillium
- Year end family service and potluck

WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING AROUND HERE?

PRAYER AT ELEVATION (weekly, after the service)



“The creation of a prayer corner in the sanctuary as well as the active participation of all of our Pastoral Care Team members has totally reinvigorated our prayer ministry.

A key highlight for me has been watching how one member of our Elevation family, who originally stepped forward just to ask for prayer, now steps up to join in prayer for others.”

- Patricia Layng, Prayer Coordinator

WORSHIP

Our worship team continues to expand, with the addition of some new musicians—including some of our youth—as well as those who have been brave enough to sit behind the soundboard and computer!

We are so thankful for the team of volunteers who faithfully give their time, energy and talents to help create space for us to come together and worship through song each week. In a recent conversation among the team, one member reflected, *“It really is such a gift to have a team of not only musically talented people, but also people that are just really great people to spend time with!”*

At the end of 2019, the worship team invited the community to join them for an evening of extended musical worship in the Sanctuary. Those who attended found it to be a meaningful time, both as individuals and as a community, and the team intends to create these spaces on a more regular basis going forward into 2020.

PASTORAL CARE

The Pastoral Care Team (PCT) is made up of ten individuals who are available to provide support to those who are walking through difficult situations or looking for referrals or community resources. To learn more, visit elevationwaterloo.org/care.

This year, the PCT hosted workshops around caring for our mental health (Mindful Mondays) and partnered with LifeVoice and the Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council to provide two SafeTALK workshops, where more than 50 individuals, from both inside and outside our Elevation community, were trained in suicide alertness and prevention. One participant writes, *“This training was so helpful. I feel like it’s given me more confidence and language around suicide, which is what I was looking for.”*

BENEVOLENCE

In a spirit of shared responsibility, the Benevolence Committee is about providing an opportunity for our community of faith to demonstrate Jesus’ love by meeting unique financial challenges being faced by others. This economic sharing is a reflection of the faith of the early believers, as found in Acts 4:32-35: “All the believers were one in heart and mind...there were no needy persons among them.”

The Benevolence Fund draws from donations made by individuals in our community on the monthly Sunday when this opportunity is available. In 2019 we disbursed **\$5,141.00** in support of members of our community.

The Benevolence Committee appreciates your ongoing financial support. We would also ask for your help in identifying situations of need in our community: We want to help, so if you or someone you know has a need, please ask! Our effectiveness depends on the financial support and honest expressions of need from members of the Elevation community. You can reach us by email at benevolence@elevationwaterloo.org.

PREACHING TEAM

This team shares responsibilities for planning Elevation’s sermon series as well as crafting and delivering sermons that connect the Biblical story to the lives of our Elevation community. In 2019, team members included Rebecca Sadhra-Corks, Graham Watson, and Christin Taylor.

While Brandon continued to be the primary communicator in his role as Senior Pastor, the other team members spoke intermittently over the course of 2019. This is a practical way for our Elevation community to hear from a broader variety of voices and learn from one another while also developing and utilizing the giftings of team members.

MISSION

We began 2019 with a time of vision-casting for Mission at Elevation. After a survey of the congregation, several meetings, and plenty of dialogue, we are moving forward with a two-pronged approach to engaging in mission.

We have four *Mission Partners*:

- **Bolivian Children Foundation**
- **Journey Team**
- **FaithTech**
- **Future of Africa**



Because of you, Solomon, Bismark, and Thomas now have favorite classes at school. They get to dream of their futures instead of dreading their nights and days. Because of you, they get to show their friends and family that hope is present and miracles are possible. We celebrate our FOA Scholars for their hard work, resilience and progress in school.

We 'sold out' our stockings at the annual Christmas fundraiser for Bolivian Children Foundation! This was especially meaningful as **Ninos Con Valor** moved to a new property where their boys' and girls' homes can function together, meaning that siblings are no longer separated.

- **Journey** handed in the sponsorship application we have been working on for years and began a conversation with Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support (MCRS) and Community Ministry about joint monthly dinners at 22 Willow to welcome refugees and newcomers to Canada
- The **Supportive Housing of Waterloo (SHOW)** team continued to attend SHOW monthly and enjoy relationship with the tenants there
- We celebrated the **Gahu** project, a racial justice community music initiative
- The **Ride for Refuge** was well supported and we raised **\$39,530.00**

The second avenue for Mission is through our *Member Initiatives*, which provide an opportunity for people from our Elevation community to request support for the organizations, events, and initiatives they are passionate about. We supported the **Sadhra-Corks family** on a mission experience with YWAM, **Melissa Melick** working with **Inter Varsity** at our local universities, **Africa Camp** which kept 22 Willow hopping in August, and other ventures taking place through **Adventure for Change**.

This team is led by **Melanie Martin** and you can reach her at mission@elevationwaterloo.org.

ELEVATION EATS

Heidi Wei took the lead on lining up hosts and guests for our monthly lunches in community members' homes. In her leadership of this ministry, Heidi values quality over quantity and expresses thanks to all of the hosts and guests, saying, *"I love that my kids know that we are part of a warm, inclusive church family."*

Neighbours!

We launched our *Neighbours!* groups at the end of November, with our first Elevation Eats - Neighbours Edition. After the service we headed back to our neighbourhoods and gathered together in ten different homes around the region to enjoy a potluck lunch together and grow in relationships with our neighbours.

One couple came to church in the morning with their home prepared to welcome their group after the service. During the service, they met a new couple who was sitting just behind them and, as they engaged in conversation, discovered that they were in fact neighbours! The host family invited the couple to join them and their *Neighbours!* group for lunch right in their own neighbourhood, and the couple eagerly accepted the invitation.

This story represents so many of our hopes for our *Neighbours!* groups - community building, engaging with our neighbours, and being a natural first step into connecting with Elevation.



STAFF PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

If you're not familiar with this team, it's because the SPC is responsible for a lot of behind-the-scenes work in our church—think of it as our mini 'Human Resources' department.

Our mandate includes providing support for the Senior Pastor and Staff team, supporting hiring processes, making recommendations for Staff remuneration, helping with research and development of staff related policies, and other occasional responsibilities. We look forward to continuing to support our Staff team and our church as a workplace in the coming year. Current team members include Katie Mak-Fan, Dwayne Taylor, and Christian Malleck.

HUMAN BEANS

In 2019, on one Thursday evening each month, Seven Shores Cafe on Regina Street was filled to the brim with students, young adults, and other interested folks from inside and outside our Elevation community. We brought in a variety of speakers (mostly university professors) tackling diverse topics from zombies to ancient Greek tragedy, from welcoming the stranger to medical assistance in dying.

These conversations continue to inspire us as we wrestle with this question: **“What does it mean to be human?”** We serve up speciality coffee and freshly baked cookies. We arrive each month not knowing who will show up and where the conversation will go. Plan to be a part of it, if this conversation grabs you!

“@humanbeans_cafe I had a lovely night in Waterloo. At a cafe full of curious people! With kind staff, owners, and a beauty of an oat milk chai latte on the house, thank you again!”

We also hosted monthly soup lunches for students and young adults, usually on the first Sunday of the month, at 22 Willow.

SUNDAY MORNINGS AT 22 WILLOW

These teams keep things humming on Sunday Mornings!

- **Welcome and Resource** - they are the friendly faces behind the Welcome Table and at the doors handing out programs. They come early to fold programs and stay late to help at the Welcome Table! Helen Kroeker oversees this team.
- **Hospitality** - These folks show up early, make coffee, put out baking, then stay late to clean it all up afterwards! Helen Kroeker oversees this team.
- **Baking** - These dedicated bakers provide delicious snacks for us to enjoy over discussion questions. Robin Grace leads this team.

EVENTS TEAM

The Elevation Events team was led by **Angie Melchin** and **Laura Bouma**. This group worked hard to create a variety of events that target all ages and stages of individuals at our church. Throughout the year, the Events team hosted the following events: Hot Date Night, Easter Pancake Breakfast, Church Picnic, and Women’s Christmas Breakfast. ***We need a new leader for this team. If you are interested, let us know!***

WE HAVE KIDS! (from Susan Fish)

Elevation began in large part because of children and children continue to be central to our church. Right now, we have 162 kids between birth and grade 5, although on an average Sunday we have about 90 children. We also have 66 volunteers teaching, helping, and supporting the spiritual growth of our kids. We could not do it without your vision and care!

I asked our volunteers why they help out in Children's Ministries—here are three responses:

"I've been in the toddler room for a while and know a few of the kids quite well. But one boy has always been quiet, easy-going and a kid that doesn't talk much or eat snacks. One day, while getting the class ready for snack-time, I asked him the usual rhetorical question of, "Would you like a snack?" The reply this time: "Yes." YES??! I had been waiting a year for him to say that one word...Another time, snack time was happening, but this boy kept playing. A few other toddlers were just about done with their snacks, and the conversation turned to Paw Patrol. The group was talking about which pup they liked best, when in the distance, we heard a very verbal boy emerging from a tent and joining in on the conversation about who his favourite was. This is why I volunteer. Being able to watch these kids grow in all sorts of ways is a joy to behold."

"There are a few reasons why I volunteer with children. I have my own children and therefore I feel a duty to be a part of their spiritual growth in and out of church. I also enjoy volunteering because I get to review the basics of my beliefs and learn it through the eyes of a child. Children are straightforward and fun!"

"Originally I volunteered because there was an ongoing need for helpers each Sunday. What I didn't realize is how wonderful it would be to get to know the children on a first name basis and to recognize them in the service on the days I don't volunteer. I now have little friends!"



This year Children's Ministries saw a shift in leadership as Sharon Leage left her Staff role after five excellent years and Susan Fish stepped in. We enjoyed a fantastic (and hot!) **Vacation Bible School** in July with a theme of ROAR, thanks to a solid VBS team and many volunteers. This fall, with huge help from Graham Watson, Sarah Flatt, the Jr and Sr Youth bands, we began a monthly **Children's Church** ministry, where our JK-grade 5 classes come together to worship and learn. We also began providing prayer shawls to babies who are dedicated. Our **Sticky Fingers** program evolved this year with a number of families moving into school or work commitments—thanks to the volunteers (Virginia Cherry, Karen Van Rassel, and Adryana Beshay) who support the parents from our community.

Thank you for entrusting us with your children each week. They are a wonderful part of our congregation and we are glad to grow in faith with them!

YOUTH

Elevation Youth meet weekly under the capable leadership of Graham Watson and his great team. Wednesdays are for Junior Youth, and Fridays for Senior Youth. They also go on a couple of retreats each year, attend **Phoenixfest** in the spring, and undertake some local service projects.

Here's what the youth and their parents have to say about our youth program!

"We have had lots of fun learning about God and studying the bible. All the games have been awesome and everyone was very welcoming and friendly. I joined the junior youth band, which was very fun. I liked the songs that we did and I loved worshiping with the kids! I liked splitting into our small groups to talk more about what we had learned from one of the leaders and what piece of the bible we had read and focused on. We have had lots of fun and laughed a lot. I made some new friends too! A lot of the other kids had the same thoughts about the bible and how and why certain things happened, which brought us together even more. Youth at Elevation is so much fun!"



"What I like about going to youth is that it is a great environment to talk and interact with people. You can talk about what happened in each other's weeks and what is going on in our life. It is also amazing because you learn more about what it is like to be a Christian and what it is like to follow Jesus in a day to day life. It is also nice because you get to play really fun games that include your brain, body and interaction.

I think everyone should go to Youth." By: Junior Youth LOVER (tessa martin)

"Thank you very much. So appreciated. Never taken for granted." (from a parent)

FACILITY SHARING PARTNERSHIP WITH TRILLIUM

We continue to work hard at having open and honest communication with our friends from Trillium, and we anticipate new opportunities will arise to work together moving forward. We will also continue to work together from time to time by sharing services, such as Good Friday and Christmas Eve, and by finding other opportunities to connect, such as the Pancake Supper and Spring Picnic. We are grateful to God for the opportunity to be here at 22 Willow.

JOINT PROPERTY COMMITTEE

The Joint Property Committee is a group that features three members each from Elevation and Trillium. This team is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the building and property and making recommendations to each congregation's senior leadership team. Other responsibilities of the Joint Property Committee include overseeing security, coordinating regular maintenance for this beautiful old building, and making arrangements for care of the outdoor property as a whole. We are continually looking for ways to reduce the costs of maintenance, and volunteers for projects are much appreciated!



*“With the merging of the Trillium congregations, there are some fresh faces and fresh ideas on the property committee. **One of the big talking points in 2019 was starting the process of making 22 Willow more accessible.** This is obviously a big task that requires a lot of thought and consideration. However, we are excited that it's on our agenda on a monthly basis, and some items are now being implemented in 2020!”*

AND FINALLY...

Elevation is led by a **Steering Committee**, which is also known as our Board of Directors. The current members of this senior leadership team are: Sue Winter, Trevor Shantz, Melissa Malo, Chad Lebold, Phil Thompson, Eli Gingerich, and Brenda Prins, with Brandon Malo serving as Chair.

In addition to the Steering Committee, the Elevation staff team works to keep things running week to week: **Brandon Malo** (Senior Pastor), **Helen Kroeker** (Community Life and Young Adults), **Graham Watson** (Sr. and Jr. Youth), **Melissa Burke** (Worship and Pastoral Care), **Susan Fish** (volunteer - Children and Family Ministries) and **Paul Sandusky** (volunteer - consultant to the staff).

If you have any questions, visit our website www.elevationwaterloo.org or contact us directly at info@elevationwaterloo.org. We'd love to hear from you!

General Fund
Statement of Operations
For the 12 Months Ended December 31

	2019	2018
Revenue		
Tithes & Offering	\$402,862	\$422,252
Global Ministry Support	0	12,624
Ride for Refuge	29,671	24,658
Miscellaneous	995	2,833
	<u>\$433,528</u>	<u>\$462,368</u>
Expenses		
Staffing	\$203,013	\$218,474
Global/Local Mission	54,883	78,357
Facility Rental	90,029	86,496
Administration	14,066	14,790
Ministry Program Spending	28,889	33,185
Other	212	710
	<u>\$391,092</u>	<u>\$432,013</u>
Surplus (Deficit)	\$42,437	\$30,355
Balance, Beginning of Year	85,729	88,374
Transfers	<u>(29,051)</u>	<u>(33,000)</u>
Balance, End of Year	<u>\$99,115</u>	<u>\$85,729</u>

Building Fund
Statement of Operations
For the 12 Months Ended December 31

	2019	2018
Revenue		
Donations	\$115	\$150
Interest	19,268	11,161
	<u>\$19,383</u>	<u>\$11,311</u>
Expenses	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>
Surplus (Deficit)	\$19,383	\$11,311
Balance, Beginning of Year	668,983	632,672
Transfer from General Fund	<u>\$25,000</u>	<u>\$25,000</u>
Balance, End of Year	<u>\$713,366</u>	<u>\$668,983</u>

Benevolence Fund
Statement of Operations
For the 12 Months Ended December 31

	2019	2018
Revenue		
Donations	\$4,714	\$660
	\$4,714	\$660
Expenses	\$5,141	\$800
Surplus (Deficit)	(\$427)	(\$140)
Balance, Beginning of Year	\$2,775	\$2,915
Balance, End of Year	\$2,348	\$2,775

Refugee Sponsorship Fund
Statement of Operations
For the 12 Months Ended December 31

	2019	2018
Revenue		
Donations	\$5,502	\$11,053
	\$5,502	\$11,053
Expenses	\$0	\$29,935
Surplus (Deficit)	\$5,502	(\$18,882)
Balance, Beginning of Year	\$68,904	\$79,786
Transfer from General Fund	\$4,051	\$8,000
Balance, End of Year	\$78,457	\$68,904

Elevation
Statement of Financial Position
As at December 31

	2019	2018
Assets		
Cash	\$146,669	\$330,879
Other Investments	756,912	504,747
Prepaid Expenses	6,752	8,003
Government Remittances Recoverable	2,183	3,062
Capital Assets	2,770	1,518
	\$915,286	\$848,208
Liabilities		
Accounts Payable & Accrued Liabilities	\$3,400	\$3,400
Deferred Contributions	18,601	18,418
	22,001	21,818
Fund Balances		
General	\$99,115	\$85,729
Building	713,366	668,983
Refugee Sponsorship Fund	78,457	68,904
Benevolence	2,348	2,775
	893,285	826,391
	\$915,286	\$848,208

Elevation

Projected Operating Budget For the 12 Months Ended December 31, 2020

Revenue	Elevation
Tithes & Offering	\$425,000
Ride for Refuge	30,635
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	\$455,635
Expenses	
Staffing	\$242,417
Facility Rental	91,800
Global/Local Mission	62,125
Administration	20,600
Ministry Program Spending	41,850
Other	1,000
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	\$459,792
Transfer to Benevolence Fund	(2,000)
Transfer to Refugee Fund	(8,000)
Transfer to Building Fund	(25,000)
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Surplus (Deficit)	<u><u>(\$39,157)</u></u>