

**YEAR IN REVIEW & MOVING AHEAD**

# **2023 ANNUAL REPORT**







I recently attended an event where I asked two people seated at my table if they had interest in faith and spirituality. After asking some additional questions, I felt prompted to briefly share the Gospel. The condensed “outline” that quickly came to mind was the Storyline of Scripture.

I began with God’s joy in the original beauty of *Creation*. That led directly to the *Separation* we so vividly experience in the evil and brokenness of our own lives and world. Next, I shared about the God-man Jesus coming to earth in flesh (*Incarnation*) and what He accomplished in His sinless life, death, burial and resurrection. The *Indwelling* of the Holy Spirit enables us to experience God’s presence, and one day there will be a *New Creation*. While I didn’t cover every point, it was certainly a helpful guide!

Many conclude that we need to move on from Scripture to be relevant in modern times, however, South Ridge has the opposite perspective. We are convinced we need to move more deeply into Scripture and the Gospel. We are also convinced we can experience the living presence of God in our inner beings through the Holy Spirit even as we carry out the good works God has given us to do.

The mission of South Ridge is for people to ***Experience Belonging, Embrace God’s Grace, and Extend God’s Love***. We truly desire for Christ to dwell in us through His Spirit as we carry His presence into the world.

*I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. (Ephesians 3:16 & 17)*

*For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2:10)*

Grace and Peace,  
Nathan Tuckey  
Lead Pastor

Dan Arthur  
Elder Board Chairman

# Ministry, Markers & Milestones

Throughout 2023, South Ridge continued to focus on the Built Together 2025 ministry plan. Officially launched in the fall of 2022, Built Together 2025 outlined a series of initiatives and ministry goals South Ridge aims to execute by the conclusion of 2025. The plan flows from the “Three Es” of our mission – *Experience Belonging, Embrace God’s Grace, and Extend God’s Love.*

## Experience Belonging

2023 was the first full year during which Experience Belonging was part of South Ridge’s mission. “Second Sunday” hospitality with pastries or other treats for the congregation to enjoy has catalyzed connection and increased conversation between services. Our rhythms of “larger events” such as the Baptism Lunch, Fall Picnic & Fireworks, and Tree Lighting have also become more established. Increased group opportunities have significantly expanded avenues for connection across a broad spectrum from Interest Groups (Volleyball, Indoor Soccer, etc.); to Care & Support Groups (Group Counseling for Grief, Trauma Healing, R-Hub, etc.); to additional life groups, and Family Ministry Groups (The Forge, The Grand Life, Moms & Daughters, Moms Mentoring Moms etc.).

## Embrace God’s Grace

The expansion of groups also increased opportunities for more focused and specialized spiritual growth. “Let’s Talk Marriage” launched in 2023, supporting couples as they grow in their marriages. Groups led by a specially trained leader or professional counselor facilitated healing in targeted areas. Desiring for people to “not just know Bible stories without knowing the story of the Bible,” our leadership team created the “Storyline of Scripture”, a graphic representation of the overarching narrative of God’s revelation of Himself and His activity in the Bible. Increased numbers of volunteers were also engaged in service with SR Kids. Additionally, Kim Moore joined the SR Staff Team in a part-time Prayer Coordinator role, cultivating prayer as the “connective tissue” of South Ridge.





### Extend God's Love

In addition to strengthening the larger “invitational events” such as Fall Picnic & Fireworks, Tree Lighting, the South Ridge congregation also expanded their invitations for holiday services. This resulted in a Christmas service attendance that eclipsed the turnout of any services since pre-COVID. South Ridge also experienced unprecedented financial generosity in 2023 with record high funds being directed “outside our doors” for educational initiatives in Zimbabwe and El Salvador during the Easter season, as well as to provide relief for war-torn areas during Year-End Giving. A new and more intuitive, navigable website was launched, and facility improvements were also planned and executed.



We are grateful for all the ways the Lord was at work in our body in 2023 and we pray that the words of the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 2:22 continue to be fulfilled: And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.



# Groups & Spiritual Growth Events

SR Groups & Spiritual Growth Events are initiatives designed to connect people with each other and see them shaped in community, through the transforming work of God's Spirit.

In February, we gathered for a "Night of Prayer and Worship," where we prayed prayers from the first half of Revelation. We also facilitated two Accelerate Weekend—one in March, where we engaged with the topic Jesus's Church Threatened but Thriving, through discussion and video content from Open Doors CEO Lisa Pearce and author & pastor David Platt; and the second in October, which featured musical guest Tony Serge as well as author, Kelly Kapic, who spoke on the topic of his award-winning book *You're Only Human: How Your Limits Reflect God's Design and Why That's Good News*.

In 2023, South Ridge facilitated ongoing opportunities for spiritually & relationally rich connection, both in small and larger group settings. One example of this was "Intermission," in the spring. The focus this time around was "Men's and Women's Outings" in which groups of 3-5 individuals were connected to share a meal together. Men's Gathering and Women's Gatherings also took place in both the fall and the spring, with over 250 men and women participating during the year.

Over 30 SR groups met throughout the year, both long-standing groups and a surge of new ones. This included new Interest Groups like Basketball and Indoor Soccer as well as new Family Ministry groups serving moms and daughters (a complement to the Forge) and grandparents. We also launched several new & much-needed Campus Groups, including "Let's Talk Marriage" and "Financial Stewardship." Existing Campus Groups, like "Women's Bible & Prayer Community", continued to see numerical growth, while Life Groups meeting off-campus continued to branch out into new locations around our region.

Given the rising mental health struggles and the lingering sense of disconnection post-pandemic, several new Care & Support Groups were also offered. In the spring, "Group Counseling for Grief" was offered, led by licensed counselor Dr. Angelina DaSilva. In the fall, "Group Counseling for Anxiety" was then offered, also led by Dr. DaSilva. In addition, SR Care facilitated a 6-week "Trauma Healing Group," created by the American Bible Society's Trauma Healing Institute.



South Ridge also took steps to simplify connection for newcomers. From creating clear signage, and offering personal recommendations at Getting Started, to improving the clarity of our online platform and enhancing seasonal our SR Groups Meet & Greet, 2023 was a year for newcomers to become increasingly plugged in.

As we move into 2024, our goals are: 1) to continue to provide effective environments for God's Spirit to shape people in community and 2) to continue to "fill the gaps" by diversifying what opportunities are offered and strategically serving a wider breadth if ages, life stages, and challenges.



# Family Ministry

Family Ministries serve children and students from birth to launch. We are also passionate about partnering with parents as they seek to lead their families and disciple their children.

## SR Kids

SR Kids, (birth-6th grade), continues to create environments that enable children to see God at work and how they can serve Him. Sunday Morning ministry reflects that, offering fun and engaging ways for children to experience solid Bible teaching while also developing relationships with each other and their leaders.

In 2023, SR Kids leaders continued to share God's word with the children of South Ridge. One exciting change for AREA 56 (our 5th and 6th graders) is that their space received a makeover complete with new furniture that enabled greater comfort for connecting!

Before our 5th and 6th graders head off to Middle School, we want them to have the opportunity to deepen their understanding of who God is and what it means to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. We strive to cultivate and model a relationally based ministry. We also hope to make it an engaging group by providing off-campus activities for kids to enjoy outside of Sunday morning. Some of the monthly activities in 2023 included a game night, a boys' and girls' hangout, and a Christmas Party.

Through our weekly offering, SR Kids continued to Extend God's Love through sponsoring our Compassion child in El Salvador., Melvin Martinez. We also purchased Christmas gifts for our friends at the Developmental Center.

2023 was also a year of staff transitions for SR Kids. Due to life changes, we said goodbye to Kim Hiemstra and Kim McCarthy who have served kids and families so well for years. We are now in the process of hiring a new SR Kids Coordinator and covet prayers for God's provision in this process.





## SR Students

SR Students, our ministry to 7th-12th graders, continued to provide meaningful opportunities for students to connect with God, other students, and leaders. Throughout 2023 we gathered on Sunday mornings for Crossover where students wrestle through their faith, process questions, and build community. On Sunday evenings at The Ridge, students enjoy two different programs: Life Group Nights, geared more toward teaching time and small group discussion and Community Builder nights (led by Jessica Hunter) that have a devotional component but is more activity and connection focused. One new event we incorporated into our Fall Launch season was a Meet-the-Leader time with our Ridge leaders, to help connect parents to the volunteers who would be discipling their students during the year.

Several times during the year, we plan intentional time away for our students to disconnect from their routines and dive into increased connection with God, their leaders, and each other. In February, we enjoyed our annual winter retreat weekend at Spruce Lake. And during the summer, our middle school and high school students enjoyed summer retreat opportunities locally in Pittstown at Camp Tecumseh and down the shore at Harvey Cedars Bible Conference.

In addition, we provided two service opportunities for our students to Extend God's Love to others. The first was a weekend service trip to Harvey Cedars Bible Conference during Memorial Day Weekend. The second was two service days where we assisted our local ministry partner, R-Hub, with some projects at their farm. We also served in a variety of ways on the South Ridge campus.



In October, we held a Fall Gathering off-campus at Burley's Golf Center in Phillipsburg. This "Extended Ridge" event provided a jump-start to relationships between students and their leaders. In addition, our Life Groups enjoyed some friendly competition through December as we held Penny Wars and raised over \$900 to contribute to their ministry of choice.

2023 was a fruitful year of connection and relationship building and we are so thankful!

We are praying with anticipation for what God is going to do in 2024 as He directs our steps.

# Family Ministry (cont.)

## Family Partnership

One area of focus in 2023 was to continue to partner with parents well through connection opportunities, events, milestone celebrations, and communication.

**Family Connect:** The mission of Family Connect is to support discipleship within families as well as connect them to community and to God. We continued this ministry in the spring and were blessed to have families gather for worship, discussion, community, and activity together as we studied spiritual disciplines. As the ministry season ended, we decided to discontinue Family Connect and try different opportunities to partner with families, including starting new Family Ministry Groups.

**Vacation Bible School:** At the end of June, we once again welcomed around 400 kids and over 150 volunteers to our campus for a week of VBS! This year's VBS theme was Keepers of the Kingdom and our kids learned about the spiritual war that takes place for their lives. We intentionally focused on the armor of God as we equipped them to fight for the Kingdom of God. It was incredible to share God's word and worship Him through activities, songs, and teaching. As a part of the week, we challenged our kids to support our Extend Ministry partner, Pastor Will. The kids exceeded our giving goal, raising over \$7,859.75 dollars. Praise God for the kingdom movement that took place as a part of VBS this year!

**Sunday Morning Family Worship:** During July and August, we tried something new to encourage families to worship together. During the 9AM service, 1st-12th graders joined their parents for a season of worship before transitioning to their respective classes. Many expressed that this was a meaningful time for their families. We hope to continue to make that part of our summer schedule in the future.



**Child Dedication Celebration:** We were blessed to have two opportunities for families to dedicate their children: one in April and one in October. Each celebration consisted of personal testimony from parents, worship, and Scripture readings, culminating with a time of fellowship and refreshments. In total, 24 children were dedicated to the Lord during our celebrations. We were grateful to witness the commitment of parents to raise their child(ren) in an environment that puts God on display in their personal lives and in their homes.

**Communication:** We continue to send out our “Info Hub” weekly via email. This provides our calendar, details about upcoming events, and some resources to our families. In addition, we have started using a texting service to send out reminders that are more time sensitive.



## Extend Ministries

While all South Ridge ministries aim to Extend God's Love to others, South Ridge Extend Ministries are especially focused on extending God's love beyond the campus, through strategically identified partnerships, projects, and initiatives.

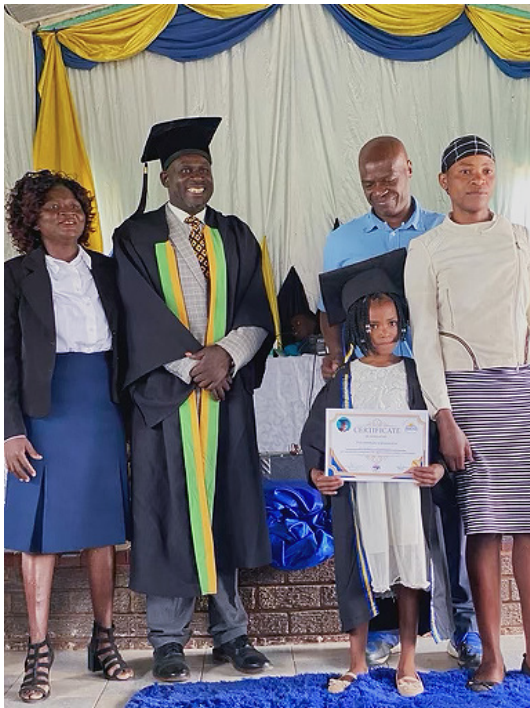
In 2023, our local community and those overseas were well served through strategic partnerships. Through the Easter Giving Project, the South Ridge community gave nearly \$12,000 to support discipleship through education. These funds assisted both Pastor Henry Zihove in launching a school in Zimbabwe and assisted Oasis Esperanza Child Development Center in shaping kids and teens in El Salvador, through life skills training programs. In August, volunteers participated in a Community Pick with America's Grow-A-Row. In November and December, the South Ridge community participated in our annual Love in Action project. In partnership with Young Lives, thousands of items were collected, and over 150 care packages were packed for teen moms across the northeast. Additionally, over 80 volunteers participated in food transportation, packing, sorting, packing, and writing notes of care.

2023 was a year to collaborate with existing Extend Partners while also developing new ones. Extend Partner, Jeff Grant, spoke at our Fall Men's Gathering on the topic "Living Missionally." In June, Pastor Will Gonzalez, Co-Director of The Friendship Center for New Beginnings, was our missionary guest for the week of Vacation Bible School. The offering for the week provided resources for Pastor Will's local ministry to children. In 2023, The Extend Ministries Team on-boarded several new partners, including Dave and Sarah Lahoda (serving with CRU in Central Asia), Sean and Erin Templeton (serving with Children's Relief International in various countries), and Michal and Angelika Szameto (serving with Crossworld in closed countries). The decision was also made to provide a level of ongoing financial support for World Relief and International Temple of Restoration (pastored by Will Gonzalez).



Because of the South Ridge congregation's generosity, Extend Ministries not only met our existing financial commitments, but were also able to give beyond our commitments. In December, \$60,000 from Year-End Giving was contributed to World Relief and Samaritan's Purse to help meet basic needs and provide trauma care in the war-torn areas of Ukraine, Israel & Gaza, and Sudan. Also, through Year-End Giving, Extend Ministries was able to bless several partners with one-time gifts to meet needs and fund life-impacting, gospel-advancing projects.

Moving into 2023, Extend Ministries aims to continue to: 1) make proactive and prayerful decisions, 2) collaborate and connect with partners, and 3) provide opportunities for the South Ridge community to be inspired, resourced, and mobilized to Extend God's Love, both across the street and around the world.



## Care & Support

In 2023, SR Care continued to meet needs and provide support through avenues such as ePrayer, Helping Hands, personal calls, and requests. We've aimed not only for our staff to be a resource, but also to mobilize our congregation to serve. One significant way that has happened is through meal sign-ups. In times of crisis & celebration, Helping Hands recipients sign up to provide meals for individuals and families, and these meal provisions so tangibly communicate the love of God, through His People.

Through a listening ear, prayer, financial assistance, and resources, 2023 was a year for SR Care to continue to walk with those in the SR congregation & local community who are experiencing challenges, struggles, loss, and turmoil. As economic challenges increase nationally, we've seen a corresponding increase in material need within our region. One frequently voiced area of need is housing. With rent so high and options so few, this has often required much discussion and prayer as we continually aim to bless people in a way that brings their gifts and abilities to bear on the challenges they're currently facing.

One area of focus in 2023 was the mental health support of our congregation. This included regular check-ins with those struggling, assistance with the cost of mental health care, and creating environments for people to process their challenges. SR Care has also continued to equip and collaborate with the Elder Board to regularly connect with our most seasoned congregants as well as those for whom it is difficult or impossible to attend in-person. Through November, SR Care coordinated our Prayer Team, providing in-person prayer after every Sunday service. SR Care continues to resource our congregation to pray, by receiving prayer requests and sending out weekly ePrayer updates.

In 2024, South Ridge Care aims to continue to increasingly: 1) communicate needs with clarity, 2) walk with people faithfully, 3) resource people well, and 4) mobilize the SR community to care for and support others, both in our congregation and our local region.

# Business Operations Team

As clearly demonstrated in the previous pages, this is an exciting time in the history of South Ridge Community Church and it is a blessing to be part of such a vibrant and growing body of believers! While there are countless examples of that over this past year, one that I personally reflect on is the Fall Picnic & Fireworks. Whether it was the first time someone set foot on our campus or even just sat in their vehicle by the side of the road, we had the opportunity to provide a gift that brought light and beauty into an otherwise dark night. It's a beautiful representation of how the light of Christ is shone every day in the lives of individuals on our campus and beyond. And your participation, prayers, service, and financial contributions help make that possible!

In 2023, we were blessed with \$2,367,680 in total income which is 10.2% higher than the prior year. This allowed us to fully cover all our expenditures, support our Extend Ministry partners and projects, and continue to place some funding aside for future facility projects including a significant investment needed for a sitewide HVAC replacement.

The Business Operations Team continues to focus on doing our best to be faithful stewards of every gift given to South Ridge. One example of that is carefully managing the cash that is set aside for future needs. In 2023, the team generated an additional \$58,000 in interest income versus the prior year by investing at competitive rates of interest. We also selected a new accounting firm to perform our annual Financial Review going forward.

We are extremely grateful for the generosity of our congregation in 2023 which allowed South Ridge to confidently execute our mission to **Experience Belonging, Embrace God's Grace, and Extend God's Love**. We recognize that our church community includes individuals and families from a variety of financial circumstances and celebrate how our meaningful growth in support came from a broad range of partners giving faithfully and sacrificially.

Dan Dietz, Business Operations Team Chairperson

*"But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand."*

*1 Chronicles 29:14*

# Financial Activity Summary

Income: January through December 2023

## INCOME

General Offering	\$2,233,022
Other Income (Solar, Interest income, Facility use, designated, etc)	\$134,658
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$2,367,680</b>

## EXPENSE

Building and Planning (Capital) (Building & Grounds, Large Facility Projects, etc)	\$162,002
Church Administration (Ministry Assistants & Coordinators, Maintenance/Cleaning, Office Operations, Professional Services, Technology, etc)	\$597,586
Congregational Growth & Development (Groups, Family Ministry, Care Needs, etc)	\$60,755
Executive Operations (Pastors, Ministry Directors, Insurance, Benefits, etc)	\$551,265
Extend Ministries (Community Outreach, Local & Global Partnerships & Projects)	\$386,685
Programming & Media (AV Equipment/Maintenance, Programming Resources, Guest Services & Marketing Communications)	\$63,935
Property Operations (Utilities, Equipment, Small Facility Projects, Service Contracts, etc)	\$167,284
SR Kids (Sunday am, Vacation Bible School, Outreach, Training, etc)	\$21,856
SR Students (Retreats, Group Life, Outreach, Training, etc)	\$23,106
Designated Expenses (SR Kids, SR Student, Extend Ministry, etc...designated gifts)	\$233,205
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$2,267,680</b>

\*numbers have been rounded



# Balance Sheet

As of December 31, 2023

## ASSETS

### Cash & bank accounts

TD Bank General Fund Checking	\$181,242
TD Choice Card Account	\$1,752
Vanguard Brokerage Account	\$1,348,498

Other Current Assets	\$195,099
<b>TOTAL CASH &amp; BANK ACCOUNTS</b>	<b>\$1,726,591</b>

### Fixed assets

Real Property	\$2,450,000
Other Assets	\$6,000
<b>TOTAL FIXED ASSETS</b>	<b>\$2,456,000</b>

### Total Assets

**\$ 4,182,591**

## LIABILITIES

### Designated funds & reserve accounts

Accounts Payable	\$22,880
Credit Cards	\$3,080
Payroll Liabilities	\$350
Designated Funds	\$1,195,941
Accrued Expenses	\$0
Miscellaneous Restricted	\$160,537
Pass Through Accounts	\$25,074
<b>TOTAL DESIGNATED &amp; RESERVE ACCOUNTS</b>	<b>\$1,407,862</b>

### TOTAL LIABILITIES & RESERVE ACCOUNTS

**\$1,407,862**

### NET WORTH

**\$2,774,729**

*\*numbers have been rounded*

