

SPIRITUAL LIFE & FORMATION

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 1:5–8

Our spiritual life is a journey. We all start somewhere; maybe it's as simple as asking a question like, "Is there a God?" A consistent theme I have heard in 2024 as I have met so many of the new people to Maplevue is about their new (or returning to) faith journey. The stories are moving, and it is exciting to see so many taking intentional steps to grow in their faith.

This year we **baptized 58 individuals** as they have gone public with this faith decision. This includes children in grade one, to a few in their 60's. We celebrate each and every one, and we are honoured to walk alongside them as they grow during their initial stages of walking with God.

We introduced an experiment within our **#ryb** (Read Your Bible) initiative by providing an option for individuals to sign up for a daily text message with a link to the daily reading. More than 180 people signed up! We also know that there are those who prefer to use the printed reading guide.

In January we also introduced the "**Holy Sexuality**" curriculum helping parents have meaningful conversations with their children around the area of sexual identity.

Our **Married Life Date Night** took place twice and followed our model of an hour at the church with "dessert first", a game, and a brief time of teaching. After which, we sent couples on their way for the remainder of the evening to go on a date.

In March a small team of Maplevue members went to Honduras on a construction-focused **Missions Trip**. We partnered with Schools of Hope Honduras and helped with the construction of a new ministry centre and church facility. We were also privileged to install 12 bio-sand water filtration systems in the homes of local community members. After installing the filter, we were able to talk to the residents about the source of "living water."

Another highlight was the **Creation Ministries** Sunday in April. We were able to have the CEO of the Canadian office speak on *A Christian View of Everything* Sunday morning and then provide an incredible presentation on *Noah's Flood* in the evening.

We were able to rally our men again for our **Band of Brothers** breakfasts featuring guest speakers like Mark Osborne of the Maple Leafs. Our **Men's Retreat** at Muskoka Bible Centre was another time of men pursuing God. Our guest speaker was Jason Small, our District Superintendent - better known at

Mapleview as “Carla’s husband.” We were even able to fit in an impromptu water baptism.

Classes

Our three core classes continue to be well attended. *re:Start* (for new and returning believers); *re:Align* (exploring spiritual disciplines to aid our spiritual formation); and *re:Purpose* (a journey of discovery to see how God has equipped us to serve Him and others).

We also introduced two new classes. First, the *Marriage Enrichment Course* where couples from all stages, healthy or challenged, put in the work to improve their marriages. Second, *Financial Freedom*, launched in the fall with content adapted from an organization with whom we are partnering. This material would usually cost hundreds of dollars per household, and we have been able to access it for no charge! We also ran the *Faith Entrepreneurs and Business Owners* group in the spring.

Studies

Our studies have continued to provide ongoing environments where participants can learn. Our studies include *Prophecy and End Times*, *Ladies Bible Study*, *Men’s and Women’s Prayer groups*, *Bema Ladies Study*, and *Ironmen*. Each of these studies has a focus on gaining biblical knowledge and understanding.

Support Groups

We have continued to offer both *Divorce Care* and *Grief Share* to support those going through specific life situations. Both of these groups continue to provide

support to those in Mapleview, but also a majority of participants are of no faith background. We are excited that we are able to minister to the community of Barrie and help provide godly counsel and support during very difficult times.

Embrace Grace is a new support group we launched this year. The focus is to provide emotional, practical, and spiritual support for single (unmarried) women with unplanned pregnancies. This 11-session curriculum teaches about God’s love, grace, and our identity. We want to support these ladies who make the courageous decision to choose life.

Connect Groups

We continue to grow in the number of Connect groups where the focus is to dig into scripture and discuss how the principles apply to daily living in a highly relational setting. We have groups that meet onsite and in host homes in Barrie and surrounding areas. We have refined our facilitator onboarding and introduced a special website for facilitator training and resources.

Thanks to all!

2024 was a very fulfilling year. Working with the staff of Mapleview has been a joy, and I’ve continued to enjoy getting to work with the various facilitators, both new and veteran alike, as we continue to build environments where people can connect with God and others and live out their faith. Our golf league continues to be a great time for both men and women to connect and compete. Finally, this year I was honoured to be chosen as the South Simcoe Police Chaplain. It has been an absolute joy to get to know and support these fine women and men.

Respectfully submitted,
Pastor John Ratz
Director of Spiritual Life & Formation