

**Mountain Lake
Alliance Church**

**2024
Annual
Report**

Love God Love People

Lead Pastor
2024 Annual Report

THE VISION
of Mountain Lake Alliance is to be a Christ-centered, regional, and multigenerational church.

THE MISSION
is to provide ministry to all ages with the intent of reaching and discipling the next generation.

THE KEY
to accomplishing our mission is to
LOVE GOD LOVE PEOPLE

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."
Matthew 22:37-40

The Key to our mission is growing in our love for God and people!

ALLIANCE

A **B** **C**

EVERYONE ATTENDS
Regularly attend Sunday service

EVERYONE BELONGS
Belong to a group

EVERYONE CONTRIBUTES
Serve with your time, talents, and resources

I believe the ABC's gives us a solid and practical way of applying the vision and mission heard at the Mountain Lake Alliance church!

I also believe the tension between Grace and Truth will continually be one of our challenges that we face in 2025. Grace is from God and is based on receiving an undeserved gift unexpectedly. Truth is based on fact and reality of God's ways. Lean too heavily on grace and risk becoming lukewarm in our convictions; lean too heavily on truth and risk becoming cold like the church in Ephesus. In John 1:14 the Bible says Jesus was full of grace AND truth. Jesus did not have tension between grace and truth, instead He fully lived out both. Unfortunately, we are not Jesus who is full of grace and truth. The church, which is us, lives in this tension.

This past year has flown by again. We have seen new families come and connect; we also have seen people come to know Christ as savior. I believe we are in a season of steady growth both in numbers and our relationship with each other and Christ. We are continuing to explore building expansion. Please be praying for God's will in this endeavor!

So Many to Thank

First, I want to thank God for the wonderful opportunity to serve as Lead Pastor of this church! Next, I want to thank my wonderful staff that makes me look way better than I am; Ricardo, Nik, Kelly, Petra, Miriam, Jessica, Tim, Kari and Johanna. I consider it an honor to serve with you and to have served with you! I could not do this job without you! To our Elders, I appreciate your wisdom and service! To the BOA and Trustees, thank you for all that you do. Much was accomplished in the building this year. Thank you to our wonderful Deaconess board, kitchen team, youth leaders, children's leaders, life learning teachers, small group leaders, mentors, ushers, men's bible study leaders, women's ministry, woman's Christmas party, worship team, media team, trunk or treat team, and safety team. Since this list is endless, please extend me grace for not going on. As you can see, there is so many people that make up the life of this Church! What a wonderful church!!

Finally, I want to thank my wonderful wife and children! I know that I can speak for them when I say we feel loved and appreciated!

Pastor Jeremy Oakland
Lead Pastor

Associate Pastor of Youth & Worship
2024 Annual Report

Hello church family! Here are some highlights of this past year 2024

Music Ministry

It is such a joy for me to be able to lead worship. I always look forward to meeting on Sunday mornings and worship with you all. We are blessed to have a great team of volunteers to whom I am thankful for using their gifts and being part of the team.

We are continuing to work on sounds upgrades around the building. We added some speakers underneath the balcony in the sanctuary, and also in the meeting room. We have some more yet to install in the sanctuary foyer. Thank you to Mike Christophel who has lead this work.

Youth Ministry

Here are some highlights of Youth Ministry:

In March we took a good group of students to the IGNITE conference in Des Moines, Iowa. It was a great time of worship and learning. We are thankful for the church bus and van that we have to be able to transport students.

Throughout this year we have had at least 10 kids give their life to Jesus, and we had 17 students get baptized. This is all the work of God's Spirit moving and working in the lives of students.

In May we had our Senior banquet. This is a special time for the graduating seniors and their parents to come and enjoy a good meal and also hear a special message for them. This year we had Jeff Jack speak to the students. It was a great night in which we celebrated 12 seniors from our church.

In the summer we had different activities like: worship night, Twins game, Valleyfair trip, DJ/Taco Night, Scavenger Hunt, and a Talent Show. It was great to connect with the kids in these fun activities.

We have been blessed to see all that God is doing in the youth ministry of our church! Lots of kids are coming each week both from our church, but also kids from the community that normally don't go to a church. We are blessed to have around 100 to 115 students every Wednesday! We know it's not about numbers, yet we thank God that we can minister to such a great number of students. We are also thankful for the God's provision through you, that we can be able to feed every student on Wednesday nights. This is a great blessing to them and to the families!!

Our leader team is a HUGE help and I can say that this ministry definitely could not function well without them. We now have 16 adult leaders as well as 2 student leaders

that help lead small groups. But not only that, they do a great job to connect with the students and lead them to live closer to Jesus.

Our youth worship team is still going strong in spite of losing some students that graduated in May. It's been great to see some of the younger students step to take the place of the seniors that graduated and lead! I know that worship is a favorite part of many of the kids that come on Wednesday nights, and it's really encouraging to see and hear how the kids worship Jesus!!

We continue to see the Lord moving in mighty ways on Wednesday nights. I ask that you keep praying for our Wednesday night programs: for the kids, for the leaders and for God's presence to be with us! Without His presence, then it's all in vain!

Preaching

I continue to preach occasionally. It's a blessing and a joy for me to do this.

Good Sam/Jail

I continue to have visitation time to Good Sam here in town, every Thursday afternoon. I can say that the group is growing! It's a joy to be able to minister to this group. I am still on the rotation for jail visitation. I usually go every 6 weeks. This is a great ministry led by Glen Letellier. I'm blessed to be part of this.

Hispanic Service

Our Hispanic Church, "Manantial de Vida" is still going on Sundays at 1pm.

Pastor Rafael has one more semester left to finish the LEAD training program. Please continue to pray for him, his family and the church Manantial de Vida.

Thank you once again for the privilege to be a part of the Mountain Lake Alliance Church family. I appreciate you all and thank the Lord for giving me the opportunity to serve you!!

In Christ,

Pastor Ricardo Renteria

Discipleship Pastor 2024 Annual Report

Small Groups:

I continue to work to develop a small group ministry at Alliance Church. I am passionate about people belonging and having a healthy community of small groups. One of the new groups this past is a small group for Young Single Adults. Another addition is that we have several groups that are open and accepting new people to join through the Church Center App. We currently have 15 adult small groups that meet and minister to each other throughout the year. Most groups meet twice a month to fellowship, pray, study God's Word, and encourage each other. My hope is that this ministry continues to grow with more groups added each year. Belonging to a small group is a great way to love God and love each other. I also wrote small group discussion questions to supplement the Sunday morning's message which several groups took advantage of. I support each small group leader through prayer and one on one connections to encourage them as they lead their group.

Discipleship/Preaching:

I had the privilege to preach several times in 2024. I enjoy the opportunity to share with the congregation and thank Pastor Jeremy for giving me the opportunity to speak. I look forward to continuing this in the year to come.

We were able to see many people participate in our Pizza with the Pastors events and several participated in our Alliance 101 classes. Both of these help leading people to make Alliance their home and to disciple people in helping them understand who we are and what we do.

Each week throughout the year I wrote small group questions that follow the sermons to help our small groups and church body dig in and apply the sermon each week.

Adult Life learning and other classes:

There were a variety of Adult Life Learning classes and Bible Studies that were taught this past year. Each one has a goal of helping our people become healthier disciples of Christ. I am grateful for the many teachers and facilitators that were led to step out and lead one of these classes. We are blessed to have great teachers. With this comes the responsibility of identifying and raising up future leaders and teachers that can step into future teaching opportunities.

Membership/Baptism:

This past year we baptized 19 individuals. We celebrated as a church body the professions of faith in Jesus Christ and their obedience to be baptized. In addition, we added 5 new members to the church. We pray they continue to grow in their faith.

Care Ministry:

GriefShare ministry ran for a number of weeks this past year and provided support and encouragement to individuals who have lost someone close to them. I am grateful for those who have supported this ministry and have invited others to join.

The Visitation Ministry connected with many people this last year. Gary & Karen Poortvliet ministered to many through this ministry. This ministry meets people where they are at. This takes place in homes, hospitals, assisted care facilities or for a meal. I am grateful to the Poortvliet's and their faithful heart to care for people. I look forward to adding more people to the visitation ministry in 2025.

DivorceCare will begin in 2025. This ministry ministers to those whose marriages have failed and are looking for biblical hope, encouragement and support. I am grateful to the vision of its leaders.

Welcome Team Ministry:

Each week our welcome teams help make Alliance Church a welcoming place. These teams serve at the doors and the Welcome Desk. This ministry helps make our church a welcoming place for new and regular attendees. I am thankful for the more than 40 people that serve in this ministry. I am looking forward to adding ushers to this team in 2025.

Thank You!

My family and I would like to thank the congregation for their support, prayers and encouragement over this past year. We continually ask for your prayers as we faithfully walk out God's calling in the coming year. It is God's church and I am privileged to serve it for such a time as this.

Discipleship Pastor
Pastor Nik

Elementary Children's Ministry 2024 Annual Report

I am incredibly thankful for the privilege of spending time learning about Jesus with your kids each week this last year! I have greatly enjoyed getting to know the kids of Alliance Church better and have a passion for building a strong foundation of faith in our children with a love for Jesus and others. We have had an amazing year! Here are a few highlights...

Kid's Church- This last summer we made a change to our Kid's Church schedule for 2nd service by going upstairs to join the congregation in a time of worship. It has been beautiful to see these young believers worshipping Jesus! After worship we head back downstairs for our lesson in which we continue to use the Orange's 252 Curriculum which is full of powerful truths and stories of the Bible while engaging them with fun and discovery. Some of the themes we have explored the last few months have been wisdom, compassion, self-control, generosity and connection. With each month's theme we have specific activities, scripture, stories and videos all building into the main theme for deeper understanding.

Life Learning- Life Learning in children's ministry continues to be an excellent environment for deeper discipleship in a smaller group setting. This fall, we began a new curriculum called *Explore the Bible* through Lifeway. This study is an expository, book-by-book study which encourages kids to explore the truths of the Bible one book at a time.

Summer Family Events- This summer I hosted 4 Kids Connect at my home where we played a variety of games, had water activities, crafts and ended our time enjoying root beer floats, praying and connecting about how they saw God working in their lives over the summer. It was such a fun way to engage the kids with fun and connection!

Vacation Bible School- This last summer we held our annual VBS June 23rd-26th. Our theme was *Rescue Mission, an out-of-this-world mission to discover God's glory!* The kids were able to enjoy a free meal, large group fun, theme based games, crafts and science rotations as well as small group time to connect in a deeper way with their leaders and ask questions. Our average attendance was over 80 kids each night with over 100 registered for the week! We also had an amazing group of volunteers who did a wonderful job shining the light and love of Jesus to these kids. It was truly beautiful to watch our church body serving and pouring out that week.

EPIC Kids- This last year we have continued to walk through the Old Testament stories with each story pointing to the greatest story of all- Jesus coming to save us! Each week the kids were able to enjoy a meal, free time with a variety of activities to connect with their friends, large group, small group, breakouts and games. On average we have had over 80 kids each night!

Trunk or Treat- This was Alliance's 5th Annual event and as always was a great time connecting with families in our community! Due to the cold weather, we decided to move

the event indoors. Before entering the building, families were able to enjoy seeing the Ambulance, Police and Fire Department vehicles as well as take a ride on a hay wagon. Upon entering Alliance, families were greeted by the A & W Bear and given a bag of goodies. They then could travel around to "trunks" in the gym and hallways to play games and receive candy. In the meeting room they could enjoy a hotdog, popcorn and hot chocolate. In the sanctuary area, kids were able to enjoy a bounce house, facepainting, crafts and for younger children a secure area just for them and their parents. We estimated between 400-500 people were in attendance this year!

Christmas Program- On December 15th, the children of Alliance ages 2 years old through high school participated in a Christmas Service featuring Children and Youth. In this service each age group had an opportunity to share in celebrating Jesus through a variety of music and readings.

It has been such a blessing to be apart of these ministries and serving alongside with so many wonderful believers! Thank you church family for all your support to myself and my family this last year!

Johanna Ruby
Elementary Children's Director

Early Childhood Ministry 2024 Annual Report

I am very grateful for the privilege I had to step into the Early Childhood Director roll back in August. It has been a blessing to be able to pour into a church that helped shape who I was as I grew up! I am excited to share with you what these past months have looked like with the students in our Early Childhood Ministry.

Here are some highlights:

Nursery (birth-23 months) - I am incredibly grateful for the roughly 37 volunteers who give their time to care for these little ones with kindness and patience. We were able to paint the nursery to match the rest of the downstairs rooms which makes the children's hallway feel cohesive. Our littlest learners can be found eating cheerios at their highchair table, building with Duplos, playing in a ball pit, swinging, or being read to and rocked by a volunteer.

Toddler Room (2 and 3 year olds) - During second service the -2 and 3-year-olds spend time in our Toddler Room where we have a variety of activities like; art activities, coloring pages, a train table, a play kitchen, legos, play-doh, cars, puzzles, a trampoline, and books. Each Sunday children are able to watch a video lesson from our Orange Curriculum highlighting our weekly Bible story. Afterwards they get to do a corresponding coloring page or craft. The toddler room is busy and fun, we average around sixteen toddlers each Sunday.

Preschool Room (4 and 5 years olds who are not yet in Kindergarten) - During second service the -4 and 5-year-olds spend time in our Preschool room. They engage in activities around the classroom before coming together to listen to our weekly video Bible story and sing songs together. Volunteers recap the Bible story aloud with students and display the weekly project students get to complete as a way to remember and reflect. After students finish their snack they are free to continue their freeplay around the room.

Life Learning - During first service there are two Early Childhood Life Learning classes. 2&3 year olds are together and 4&5 year olds (but not yet in Kindergarten) are together. Both classes are going through a new curriculum this year called Explore the Bible. This curriculum is concisely put together with many options for developmentally appropriate activities to go with each weeks Bible story. This curriculum is unique because 2 year olds all the way through 4th graders are learning about the same Bible story each week, so families with multiple children are able to come home and all discuss the same story at various depths depending on a child age. I am very grateful for the dedicated life learning teachers who have built deep and meaningful relationships with students.

Pow Wow Booth - Children's Ministry again provided a bounce house and "mom's room" at Pow Wow. This is a wonderful chance to get to know members of our community! The "mom's rooms" is for any moms at Pow Wow who needed a safe and clean place to

change or feed their babies. We received a lot of great feedback and hope to provide this booth again at Pow Wow this next summer.

Christmas Program - The Toddlers and Preschoolers were able to participate in the Christmas Program again this year. The 283 year olds sang 'Away in a Manger' while wearing sweet animal costumes and the 4&5 year olds sang 'Go Tell it on the Mountain'. Students did a wonderful job practicing these songs with their actions before the program in their classrooms and at home. It was fun to see them on stage shining the light of Jesus at Christmas time!

Child Dedication - I was able to be a part of the child dedication in November and it was a beautiful dedication to witness. So many young families are excited to lead and raise their little ones with Christ as the focus. In November we had 2 children dedicated at 1st service and 7 dedicated at second service! We rejoice with them!

I am thankful and grateful to be in this role at Alliance and have the opportunity to work with dedicated and Christ centered individuals. Thank you for trusting me with the youngest learners at Alliance.

Sincerely,

Kari Ellis, Early Childhood Director

Elder Board 2024 Annual Report

The Elders are responsible for spiritual oversight and governance of the church. As Elders we are focused primarily on Vision or Ends; how we believe God is calling us to change the world, for whom, and at what cost. We spend a part of every meeting discussing our vision as a church, the unique problems or situations we are facing, the opportunities and resources God has given us, prioritizing our resources to those ends, and praying for these needs, opportunities, and for guidance and provision, as well as praying for specific people and needs within our body.

The Elder Board is chaired by our Lead Pastor, and is responsible for Vision, while our Lead Pastor, through his staff, is responsible for Mission, or Means of accomplishing that Vision, and therefore is responsible for all church programs and ministries. The Board of Administration is responsible for Mission as it pertains to buildings, grounds and finances.

This was Pastor Jeremy's fourth year as our lead pastor, and chairman of the Elder Board. It has been a privilege to serve with Pastor Jeremy as he intuitively keeps the main thing the main thing... loving God and loving people, in his preaching and teaching. I continue to appreciate his sharing of the preaching with Pastors Ricardo and Nik, and I had an opportunity to preach as well again this year on the topic of "Seeing People as God Sees Them".

Attendance increased again over the past year to an average near the end of the year of over 475 people, many of which are young families with children. We desire to reach and minister to people of all ages, but appreciate Pastor Jeremy and his staffs' continued emphasis on reaching and discipling the next generation. The youth ministry continued to grow with as many as 125 students on Wednesday nights, and as many as 75 elementary aged children in the new Epic Kids Program. We are encouraged that on Wednesday nights our church reflects the diversity in our community.

We appreciate Pastor Ricardo and Miriam and his team, and Johanna and Kari, and their team, and all they are doing to minister to kids in our community. We also appreciate all the volunteers who have made it possible to feed kids each Wednesday evening before Youth Group and Epic Kids ministries begin. We also appreciate all of you who have utilized the church bus to pick up kids who need rides to the church to participate in these ministries. We also appreciate Pastor Nik, his ministry to people, oversight of life learning, and the growth and depth he is working toward with the small group ministry in our church. We also appreciate the work Jeff Jack is doing in coaching young adults in our church, personally and as couples in their marriages. We also continue to appreciate Gary Poortvliet and his visitation ministry.

The Elders working together with the Board of Administration and a planning and design committee completed preliminary plans to renovate the west end of our facility, and kicked off a capital campaign to raise the \$950,000 needed to complete the project. We

have been utilizing the gym as a worship center for the past 25 years, which was never designed for that purpose. Our goal is to increase seating capacity in the gym, create an open lobby area where people can gather before and after services, and make that end of the building a more welcoming environment. We appreciate the generosity of our congregation; \$725,000 was either given, pledged or committed to this project, which was enough to begin work. In the end, we decided to pause the project and explore alternate plans in hopes of finding a plan that better accomplishes our goals and requires less demolition of our existing facility. This may require the purchase of additional property.

We appreciate the generosity of this congregation in giving financially to support the ministry here, and all of you who cheerfully volunteer in ministering to others. It has been a blessing to serve in this congregation. We appreciate Jessica and the ways she supports Pastor Jeremy in his ministry, her own ministry to people, and her own role in the worship ministry. Kelly has done an awesome job in keeping everything and everyone organized and introducing new ways to communicate and meet needs within the body. We are truly blessed.

Elders provided prayer, mentoring and benevolence to a number of persons and families in our church this past year, as well as facilitating the cup of water ministry, that assists with the needs of people in our community. As Elders, we consider it a privilege to serve the body in this way. We sense God's calling, and rely on His guidance and provision, in facilitating the building up of the body in the faith, and the goal to reach maturity in Christ. Our Lay Elders this year included: Bryan Barga, Ken Kramer, Mike Pearson, Austin Klassen, Jason Espenson, and Jordan Milbrath. Their commitment to Christ and leadership in our body is greatly appreciated.

Respectfully Submitted - Bryan Barga - Head Elder

"We strive to be a community that loves God and loves people. Our Vision is to be a Christ centered, regional, and multigenerational church. Our mission is provide ministry to all ages with the intent of reaching and discipling the next generation."

Board of Administration
2024 Annual Report

The Board of Administration members are Jeremy Oakland-Pastor, Bryan Bargaen-Elder, Norman Holmen-Treasurer, Karl Wassman-Assistant Treasurer, Michael Christophel-Trustee, and Jim Johnson, Marty Espenson, and Audi Nickel-Members at Large.

The board met bi-monthly or as needed to discuss and conduct business of the church.

Put in motion were the painting of parsonage, helped line up the remodel of the worship center, and oversaw many other projects.

Michael Christophel, Secretary

Trustee Board
2024 Annual Report

The 2024 Trustee Board included Mike Christophel, Doug Hartzler, Rod Junker, Tim Penner, Jerry VanDyke, and Bob Waker

Some of the projects we oversaw in 2024 include making the new moms room, upgrading the water fountain in hallway, finish the remodel of the sanctuary, change locks on outside doors, put on main entrance key pad, added outside main entrance safety light, new freezer for kitchen, cement for drive way of parsonage, and a new front door and other projects inside the parsonage.

Michael Christophel

Deaconess Board
2024 Annual Report

The purpose of the Deaconess Board is to serve our congregation. It is our desire to help care for the body of Christ here at Mountain Lake Alliance. This past year's activities included:

- Attending planning meetings
- Managing the prayer chain. Thank you to those who partnered with us in prayer for those in need.
- Preparing for communion when it is part of the service.
- Sending cards to those who were ill, hospitalized, or needed a word of encouragement.
- Encouraging our recent high school graduates by sending them a care package in the fall.
- Setting up meals for families who have a need. Thank you to everyone who has volunteered to prepare and deliver a meal to a family.
- Praying for the families in our church and the missionaries we support.
- Sending memorials for funerals.

In His Name and for His Glory!

Brenda Harder
Deb Johnson
Marta Junker
Kelly Nelson
Laura Penner
Michelle Quintero
Sue Rempel
Heather VanDyke

Women's Ministry
2024 Annual Report

In January Merna Swanson did a 6 week long bible study in the morning called "Discerning God's Voice" by Pricilla Shirer,

In March, we held "Jireh"; a discipleship event for women. Zana Blomberg was the speaker for the day. She did an amazing job. We had about 60 women who attended our Saturday event.

After the Jireh event, Gretchen Beyer joined our team with Alicia Schwanke's decision to step down from the Women's Ministry team.

We had two events during the summer months. The first was a women's bonfire night with about 20 in attendance. It was a beautiful night of worship, getting to know other women, and connection. The second event was a Sourdough Starter Class. Heather VanDyke and Marta Junker taught us how to use a sourdough starter to make bread from scratch. We held the event at Abundance with about 25-30 women that attended. They all went home with a sourdough starter.

The Alliance Missionary fall retreat was held October 11-13. The retreat was held in Alexandria, MN this year.

Jessica Oakland led a bible study starting in mid October through mid November. The bible study was called "When You Pray" by Kelly Minter, Jackie Hill Perry, Jen Wilkin, Jennifer Rothschild, Jada Edwards and Kristi Mclelland. She offered two classes with about 20 women attending the night class and anywhere from 15-20 in the morning class.

"Jingle and Mingle" was held in December. There were about 140 women who attend the wonderful night. This year we changed it up a little bit and instead of one speaker, we had six different women who shared a Christ-centered Christmas tradition. It was a special night with music from Johanna Ruby and Sarah Klassen.

"Let's Have Coffee" led by Karen Poortvliet continues to meet once a month on Thursdays.

Heather Rahn

Tammi Samuelson

Gretchen Beyer

Patty Espenson

Alisa Nickel

Heather VanDyke

Members:

The 2024 Annual Financial Report is available by request from the church office.

