
MINISTRY UPDATE



Background and Founding

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Pastor and Church Planter

Living Hope Community Church (LHCC): A Brief History

Living Hope Community Church was planted in November 2019 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic by Pastor Mark and his family. For its first year, the church operated entirely online before transitioning to in-person gatherings at Hebron Church in Whitby.

Growth & Membership:

Since its inception, LHCC has experienced steady growth. The church has baptized 12 individuals to date and welcomed 30 members into official membership. The leadership team has expanded to include one elder and three deacons who faithfully serve the community, reflecting the ongoing development of the church plant.

Mission & Outreach:

In 2023, LHCC embarked on its first mission trip to Guyana, seeking to discern God's leading and to be a blessing to the leadership there. Eight participants joined this discernment journey, including one member from Hebron Church and three members from Resonate Global Mission.

In July 2025, LHCC will return for its second mission trip, focusing on training 25-30 leaders in Timothy Leadership Training (TLT) and hosting multiple informational sessions.

Community Engagement & Events:

- **Annual Worship Night:** LHCC hosts an annual worship night, bringing together a diverse group of churches to share in different expressions of worship. Hebron Church has also participated in these events, fostering inter-church collaboration.
 - **Community BBQs:** LHCC has organized two large community BBQs, each drawing over 500 families. These events included invitations to local services such as ambulance, fire, and police, offering children memorable close-up encounters with first responders.
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- **University Outreach:** LHCC has spent a week at Durham College and Ontario Tech University, engaging with international students and individuals from diverse backgrounds in conversations about faith, life, and salvation.
- **Annual Family Fun Day:** For the past two years, LHCC has hosted an annual Family Fun Day at Canada Christian College to provide a time of fellowship, fun, and games for families.
- **Diaspora & Conference Leadership:** LHCC participated in leading worship at the 3rd Annual Diaspora Leadership Retreat (2024) and the Moving Forward in Faith Conference (2024), both of which emphasized diversity and inclusion.
- **Discipleship Groups:**
 - In addition to the Sunday evening worship service, LHCC runs weekly men's, women's, and young adults' meetings.
 - For the past five years, LHCC has maintained a dedicated prayer team that meets twice daily to intercede for the church, its ministries, and the broader community.

Leadership Development & Training

- **Church Planting & Coaching Development:**
 - **In 2022**, Both Debra and I completed the Stadia Church Planting Assessment, earning one of the highest scores as a couple among a group of 40+ participants.
 - **Annual Church Retreat:** In 2023, LHCC held its first annual church retreat to deepen spiritual growth and community engagement with its leadership team and other members of the church community.
 - **In 2024**, I completed Church Planting Coach Training with Fuller Seminary, a nine-month cohort program alongside other church planters from across Canada and the U.S.
 - **IDI Training:** I also completed the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) Assessment to deepen my understanding of cultural engagement.
 - **Leadership Training**, All of LHCC leadership received training as Elders and Deacons under the CRCNA guide book led by Pastor Martin Spoelstra.
 - **TLT**, both Debra and I completed the Basic Certification for Timothy Leadership Training (TLT) and are now working toward advanced certification. So far, they have also completed TLT Manual 1 training with LHCC leaders and Discovery Church.
 - **Advisory Board & Strategic Oversight**
 - Since the launch of LHCC, the church has been supported by an advisory board that meets monthly. This board includes two advisory members from Hebron, one member from Classis Quinte Home Missions Committee, and LHCC leaders. Their role is to provide guidance, encouragement, and oversight to ensure the smooth operation of the church plant.
 - To strengthen their partnership with Hebron, LHCC's worship leaders—including the drummer and pianist—have actively participated in Hebron's Sunday morning services when available. However, since mid-2023, LHCC's increased activities have limited their availability for this commitment. As Pastor of LHCC, I ensure that an annual update of LHCC is sent to Hebron CRC to encourage their continued second-offering financial support.
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Strengths of LHCC as a Church Plant

LHCC's growth and impact are shaped by several key strengths:

- **Resilience and Adaptability:** Successfully overcame the challenges of launching during COVID-19, adapting seamlessly to in-person gatherings.
- **Strong Leadership:** Led by Pastor Mark and a committed leadership team, providing stability and vision.
- **Diversity and Inclusivity:** Includes members from over 14 languages and 12 cultures, forming a welcoming and diverse faith community.
- **Commitment to Discipleship:** Small groups, mentorship, and intentional spiritual formation foster deep faith development.
- **Worship and Church Unity:** The Annual Worship Night brings together churches, fostering inter-church collaboration.
- **Missional Engagement:** Actively engaged in local and global missions, including Guyana trips and TLT leadership training.
- **Leadership Development:** Dedicated to equipping leaders, ensuring the church's long-term sustainability.
- **Spirit-Led and Prayerful:** Built on a strong foundation of prayer and discernment, following God's guidance in every decision.
- **Steady Membership Growth:** With 30 committed members and an expanding leadership team, the church is establishing a strong foundation.
- **Vision for the Future:** Committed to long-term sustainability, leadership training, and expanded outreach, both locally and globally.

Future Opportunities and Next Steps

As LHCC grows, several opportunities can amplify its impact:

- **Expanding Leadership Training:** Providing ongoing mentorship and theological training for emerging leaders.
 - **Strengthening Community Partnerships:** Deepening relationships with local organizations and global missions to increase outreach.
 - **Enhancing Discipleship Pathways:** Creating structured programs to help new believers grow in faith and leadership.
 - **Sustaining Multicultural Worship:** Continuing to celebrate and embrace cultural diversity in worship and community life.
 - **Developing Long-Term Ministry Goals:** Focusing on church planting, leadership multiplication, and sustainable mission efforts.
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Conclusion:

LHCC has demonstrated remarkable growth and resilience as an emerging church plant. The church has successfully navigated the challenges of starting during the pandemic, expanding its membership, deepening discipleship, and actively engaging in local and international mission work.

Under our leadership (Mark and Debra), as we balance secular careers with our full-time commitment to LHCC, this church continues to flourish. I, Mark, also serve part-time with Resonate Global Mission and actively participate in various leadership and training initiatives.

Through its dedication to worship, mission, and community impact, LHCC is establishing itself as a vital, intercultural church plant. It remains committed to spreading the gospel and equipping leaders for Kingdom work.

With God's guidance, LHCC is poised for long-term sustainability and Kingdom impact.
