A light blue world map with several orange location pins scattered across the continents.

2025

ANNUAL REPORT

FIND *God* **AGAIN**
HERE I AM SEND ME! ISAIAH 6:8



ANCHOR
CHURCH
— PALOS —



Contents

Annual Reflection.....	4
Hall Family Update.....	5
Anchor Kids.....	6
Awana.....	7
Vacation Bible School.....	8
Anchor Women.....	9
Anchor Men.....	10
Student Ministry.....	11
Worship Ministry.....	13
Farewell Stephen and Nikki.....	14
Special Testimonies.....	15
Anchor Berwyn.....	19
Missions.....	21
Baptisms.....	25
1,000 Day Vision Recap.....	27



Annual Reflection

2025 was like a fireworks finale as our 1,000-day strategic plan came to a bold and bright finish. God moved in miraculous ways, and we are overflowing with joy. Last year was our “Sweet 16th” birthday as a church—a special milestone reached by God’s grace.

The year began with our 2nd annual Bible reading marathon. We read the entire Bible out loud as a congregation over an 80-hour period. We built everything on the solid foundation of God’s Word. On Sunday mornings, we studied the Gospel of Mark. On Monday nights, we studied the Life of Christ at ABI (Anchor Bible Institute).

It was a big year for missions and church planting, as we sent Bill and Maria Ibarra out to launch Anchor Church Berwyn. I was put in charge of training Bill and 7 other Chicagoland church planters. Pastor Alex (miraculously) got permission to come to the US from Ukraine! We sent a team to Sierra Leone through “Hands on Africa.” Decision Point (high school evangelism) saw over 5,000 teenagers attend Gospel rallies in Illinois, and 482 indicated a first time decision for Christ. And it was our best year of local outreach at Anchor. We handed out thousands of church invitations and Gospel tracts in the Palos area and in the city of Chicago.

Church got DRAMATIC, as we produced two plays last year. Early in the year, we did, “The Living Last Supper,” which brought the famous Leonardo Davinci painting to life. Later in the year, we offered an original musical, “Drummer Boy’s Dream.” Hundreds of people heard the gospel at these powerful performances.

In kids’ ministry, our VBS theme was “Magnified.” We had 176 kids attend each night. We saw about 55 children respond to the gospel this year! In student ministry, we had over 100 teenagers and over 50 volunteers at our “Unashamed” conference where they learned to share their faith boldly. Student ministry continued to experience revival, as teenagers surrendered to Christ and experienced a true outpouring of God’s presence.

On Sunday mornings, we averaged about 456 people in-person and online each week (up from 439 last year), and we had a high attendance of 741 for Easter (462 in-person and 279 online, up from 630 last year). 67 people took the Anchor Tour, 34 went through Step 2, 26 people joined the church, and we baptized 19 people. Over the past 3 years, we baptized 66 people! We are committed to ongoing leader development, and 35 people attended “Welcome to Leadership,” while 38 people attended our “Leader Training 1.”

Glory to God that we collected over \$800,000 in general fund income and offerings! We also collected/received \$60,000 for the Global Fund (!!!), \$42,000 for the Building Fund, \$5,000 for Benevolence, and \$58,000 for Anchor Berwyn. We are closing in on a million dollars in total annual offerings and income. Glory to God!

It was a banner year of ministry at Anchor Palos, and we are thankful to everyone who helped to make the past 1,000 days a special time of revival in our church and community.

Serving Jesus,

Pastor Ryan

Pastor Ryan Family Update

The Hall family had a lot to celebrate in '25. The biggest celebration last year was our 25th wedding anniversary! Lauren and I took an amazing trip to Italy and Greece. We saw Venice, Florence, Rome, Athens, Corinth, and Andros Island. It was a wonderful way to celebrate God's faithfulness in bringing us together.

Lauren began her third year as a full-time teacher at Chicago Christian High School, and she is thriving (English/Academic Support).

Ellie finished her master's degree in special education (ABA). Cassie completed her internship at Breakthrough Urban Ministries downtown as she finishes her senior year at Spring Arbor University. Jared graduated High School and headed down to Grace College in Winona Lake, IN. He is majoring in business (marketing and sales).

I was able to take a much-needed sabbatical as our church reached our 16th birthday, which gave me extra time to spend with the family. We enjoyed another camping trip to Ludington, Michigan. Jared and I also took a guys' trip to Door County, where he caught the biggest fish of his life.

In the fall, we had a special Thanksgiving celebration in Nashville with Ellie and Cade—one last hurrah before they moved back to Chicago late last year.

We battled through some headaches in '25, notably three of our four cars needed to be replaced all at once. We also took great initiative to repair some broken relationships, and we trust our efforts will bear fruit in time. Overall, God was faithful and filled us with joy, and we give him praise and glory.



Anchor Kids

Our mission in Kids Ministry, is to come alongside families to help equip kids to be faithful in their walk, worship, work, and witness for Christ. We pursue this through our Sunday lessons, Kids Worship, and special programs like Awana and VBS. We also encourage the kids to serve by leading worship; this year, they did an incredible job on Palm Sunday and during our Kids Christmas Service. These performances are wonderful opportunities for families to invite unbelieving relatives to hear the Gospel and see the adorable children sing.

On Sunday mornings we utilize Lifeway's Gospel Project because it is biblical, relevant, and engaging. Over a three-year cycle, the kids journey through the entire Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, discovering how every story points to Jesus. Each lesson is tailored to specific age groups and includes: A Story Point, pointing to Christ in every story of the Bible, A Key Passage, scripture to memorize and equip our kids with the "sword of truth." And A Big Picture Question and Answer, teaching them foundational Christian doctrines. Classes feature fun activities to reinforce these concepts, and we provide worksheets with follow-up questions to encourage family discussions throughout the week.

God is stirring hearts to serve him by ministering to the children of Anchor. Because of the obedience of these servants we have been able to add an additional team to the Sunday morning rotation, new additions to our AWANA team and to our VBS Team! All Praise and Glory to our Great and Faithful Lord!



Awana

Our AWANA midweek program is another opportunity for us to help assist our families with growing the faith of their children, and to spread the gospel to kids in our community. We see the faithfulness of God stirring in the hearts of the next generation to go out and invite friends to experience him. Each year we have more and more friends join AWANA. One of our students changed his game user name to “God Is Alive” because he was gaming with someone online who put “God is a Lie” and he wanted all his online friends to know the truth.



Each week, our team partners with families to help children grow in their relationship with Jesus. The kids memorize verses to better understand who Jesus is and how much he loves us, listen to lessons about our all-powerful God and how to share their faith, and enjoy games, new friendships, and exciting theme nights. Our team loves spending time with their groups getting to know them and building relationships while showing them how to have a relationship with Jesus. Last year we witnessed a transformation in one of our 3rd graders. He used to begrudgingly come every week to AWANA, and then one day he showed up and the Lord had changed his heart and now he’s surrendered to Christ and is on fire for the gospel!

Throughout the year, we host several events where families can join the fun. These include our Operation Christmas Child packing party, our year-end Finale night where kids receive awards for their accomplishments, and the fan-favorite Awana Grand Prix. We share the Gospel at every event, which is vital as many of our students are invited by friends and come from families who may not be familiar with the program or the message of salvation. We love having these opportunities built into the schedule to see God at work in these homes.

I truly enjoy working with this team. Every leader arrives weekly with a smile and a heart full of joy. We love getting to know the kids and watching their faith in our Lord flourish. We also have a blast participating in the theme nights ourselves!

A Special Thank You From Sara!

Last year, these teams stepped up in a massive way. When I injured my back at the beginning of the year, I never imagined I’d be unable to walk or sit for several months. Everyone on these teams not only kept the program running smoothly but also covered me in prayer and encouragement. I am forever grateful for your dedication and thank God for each of you every day.

Vacation Bible School



Vacation Bible School is one of our biggest opportunities to reach our community. This year's theme was "Magnified," where children discovered that we are all created to magnify God!

Once again, we distributed invitations during the Palos 4th of July Parade—another significant outreach event—and God faithfully led many new families to our doors. Throughout the week, kids memorized Scripture through song, stories, crafts, games, and snacks. Each night focused on foundational truths about Jesus and how to walk in a relationship with him.

The VBS team poured their hearts into this mission, and the impact was profound: we welcomed 176 children, 55 of whom accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior! We concluded the week with a vibrant Family Night Block Party that packed the Worship Center. New friendships were formed, and most importantly, the Gospel was shared throughout our community.

To our incredible VBS Team: thank you for the countless hours spent in preparing for VBS and serving at VBS. Your dedication in showing Christ's love to every child made this year a success. Thank you for making VBS possible and truly God-glorifying!



The heart of Women’s Ministry is to deepen women’s love for and knowledge of the Word, strengthen relationships, and encourage them to walk more closely with Christ. 2025 proved to be a year where all of those things happened in abundance! Women grew in their knowledge and love of the Word by doing Bible studies on Wednesdays. The first study was a topical study called “When You Pray” which taught women to prioritize and deepen their prayer lives. Next, the women worked through a mini-study called “Nice”, which taught the Biblical way to be kind and generous. Finally, in the Fall we studied the book of Proverbs in “The Way of Wisdom”, featuring many of our favorite Bible teachers. Many women commented on the fact that they learned so much about God’s character and wisdom even though they had read Proverbs many times before. God’s word is truly living and active!

Beyond our focus on the Word, women were able to build relationships with each other in meaningful ways through our Prayer Breakfasts and Flourish events. Each month, these events found women praying for one another and building lasting, godly friendships. We are so grateful for the many women who stepped up to lead, showing hospitality and using their unique talents to make our events both beautiful and welcoming. A special thank you goes to the **Women’s Ministry Leadership Team**—Lauren Hall, Nikki Anderson, Krystle Sieczkowski, Sharon Parney, Barb Anderson, Mary Huizinga, and Pat Mensik,—for devoting your prayers, time, and talents to make this year possible.





The Anchor men continued to enjoy strong fellowship in 2025. We started each month with a prayer breakfast. We enjoyed special events like a golf outing, burger night, and men's leader retreat. We also offered men's basketball on Saturday mornings. Our men are sticking together as we follow Jesus into a bright future.



Anchor Students

The Lord has blessed us with another incredible year at Breakthrough Anchor Student Ministry. His hand has been upon our students, our leaders, and our community in a powerful way, and we have seen God move in ways beyond what many of us have experienced in years past.

We began the year in January with a winter spiritual retreat, committing ourselves to fasting, prayer, and seeking the Lord together. As is our practice, we devoted the first Sunday of the year to a day of prayer and fasting with our students, ending the evening in worship and prayer as we committed the year and the months ahead to the Lord and asked him to lead us in the ways we most need. God answered those prayers by pouring out revival through the Holy Spirit. At the Chicago Christian Junior Summit near the end of January, God ignited a spark of revival in the hearts of students from Chicago Christian High School who soon began visiting our group. That spark fanned into flame what God was already doing among our students at Breakthrough.

In February, during Feast Night, God poured out his Spirit powerfully. Many students who had already been experiencing God's work in their lives responded with a deeper hunger for his presence and a more radical surrender of their lives and time to him. That same fire was carried into winter camp, where the flame that began in our community spread to multiple youth groups. In one unforgettable moment, over 200 students responded at the altar in surrender to Jesus. This continued to confirm a growing confidence that God is raising up this generation to return to him, ignite revival in the Church, and walk in faithful surrender and obedience.

In the weeks that followed, we walked through a series called *Sustaining the Flame*, focusing on stewarding the awakening God had begun. Shortly after, at the Unashamed Conference, we experienced the presence and power of God poured out in remarkable ways. Two moments stand out in particular: the leader prayer meeting that preceded the conference, and the unplanned prayer and worship gathering that erupted before and during the opening of the event, as students cried out to God and begged him to move powerfully throughout the day. In keeping with the theme, we truly tasted and saw that the Lord is good as students were trained to walk with Jesus practically and experience his presence daily. Their growing love for Jesus began to overflow naturally into boldness, obedience, and gospel witness.

As the semester came to a close, students from other youth groups who had encountered God at winter camp and Unashamed began regularly joining us on Sunday nights. This growth was reflected in attendance: from an average of 28–30 students at the start of the year to multiple nights of over 60 students by the spring. God's presence became an infectious draw, as students continued returning hungry and thirsty for more of him.

In May, we joyfully celebrated and sent off 16 graduating seniors, along with several seniors who had consistently joined our ministry from other youth groups. One of the great joys of this season was witnessing the flames of revival spreading beyond students to leaders and adults within the church, as many were impacted by the supernatural work of the Spirit.



During the summer, we attended both high school and junior high camps at Silver Birch, a place that often feels like holy ground as students step away from distractions and center their hearts on Jesus. God moved powerfully at both camps. One moment I will never forget was sitting with our junior high boys and witnessing four out of six give their lives to the Lord at different points during the week. While much of the revival was experienced among our high school students, its fruit became increasingly evident in our junior high students as well. In July, we partnered with a church from the Send Network in Houston for a Chicago mission trip. Together, students worshiped, served, and boldly proclaimed the gospel throughout the city, including downtown locations such as Navy Pier and Wrigley Field. Through these conversations, many people came to faith as students and leaders shared the love of Christ.



In September, we launched another year of Breakthrough with a worship night and were deeply encouraged by the growth and maturity of our leader team. God has faithfully placed leaders according to their gifting, and their sacrificial investment in students has been a defining strength of our ministry. That same bold faith was evident early in the year during *See You at the Pole*, as students stood publicly for Jesus in their schools. Throughout the year, students were rooted in Scripture through series such as *Remember Me* in Exodus and through the use of the Discovery Bible Study, an approach that helped students not only understand Scripture but respond in obedience as God spoke to them personally through his word.



In November, we experienced a powerful spiritual retreat marked by prayer, worship, silence, and spiritual depth—particularly among our sixth- and seventh-grade students. We closed the fall semester with Friendsgiving, highlighted by student testimonies and growing leadership, including a powerful moment when Maddie Le shared her testimony and devotion in obedience to the Spirit.



Looking back, we celebrate a year of growth in both students and leaders as disciples who are radically following Jesus. We also celebrate the lives that were saved through Sunday gatherings, small groups, conferences, and outreach. God continues to move powerfully in our student ministry, and it has been a joy and privilege to play a small role in what He is doing. We look ahead with faith and expectation, praying that the Lord would continue to fan into flame the work he has begun, doing “far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us” (Eph. 3:20)



Pastor Stephen Anderson

Worship

The Worship and Tech Ministry at Anchor has experienced another truly incredible year. Throughout this season, the Lord has been faithful to grow us—not only in skill and excellence, but more importantly in our love for him, our unity with one another, and our shared experience of his presence as both a team and a church family.

Week after week, it has been a joy to watch our church respond with increasing freedom and joy in worship. There is a growing hunger among our people to lift high the name of Jesus, and it has been a privilege to stand together as we lead our church before the throne of God. Worship has not simply been something we do, but a place where we meet with the Lord together.

This year, we have been blessed to be led by three key worship leaders: Pastor Ryan Jackson, Sarah Ly, and Pastor Stephen Anderson. Each of these leaders has played a vital role in shepherding our church into God’s presence with humility, faithfulness, and sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit. We are deeply grateful for their hearts, their preparation, and the way they have served our church so faithfully through worship.

We are deeply thankful for every member of our Worship Team who has served so faithfully this year. Your willingness to prepare, rehearse, pray, and lead with humility has been a profound blessing to our church family. Week after week, you have used your gifts not to draw attention to yourselves, but to point hearts toward Jesus and create space for the people of God to encounter his presence. Your faithfulness, sensitivity to the Spirit, and love for the Lord have helped shape a culture of joyful, Christ-centered worship at Anchor.

We are also incredibly thankful for our Tech Team, whose faithfulness often happens behind the scenes but is essential to everything we do. Through their diligence and servant-hearted leadership, our services have continued to run smoothly, creating space for our church family to engage fully in worship without distraction. Their work allows us to keep our eyes fixed on the Lord and creates an environment where the gospel can be clearly seen and heard.

Each person who serves on our Worship and Tech teams is uniquely gifted and deeply valued. Every role—whether seen or unseen—matters greatly in the life of our church. It has been a joy to watch team members grow not only in their gifting, but also in their confidence, unity, and love for the Lord and one another.

We are profoundly thankful for every individual who has chosen to serve the Lord through worship and tech this year. Your faithfulness, humility, and willingness to offer your gifts to God have made a lasting impact on our church family. As we look ahead, we do so with gratitude for what God has done and with expectation for all that he will continue to do!



Farewell Stephen & Nikki

What an incredible four years it has been. Our time at Anchor Church has been one of the greatest gifts the Lord has given our family, and we are deeply grateful for each and every one of you. Anchor has been more than a place we served—it has been our home. It has been a community where we have encountered the love and presence of Jesus again and again, and where our family has been known, supported, healed, and formed. Saying goodbye in this season is filled with both gratitude and grief, because we love you so dearly.

Responding to God's call into a new season at 180 Chicago has been the most difficult decision Nikki and I have made together. Anchor is the place where we have grown, where we raised our children, and where we envisioned being for many years to come. Yet after months of prayer, fasting, discernment, and wise counsel, the Lord made his calling unmistakably clear, and we sensed him inviting us—once again—to step out of the boat and onto the water.

What has made this transition especially difficult is the depth of love we have experienced here. God knew exactly what our family needed in this season of our lives, and he provided it through this church. Even if we had never served in a pastoral role, this is the community we would have prayed for. You have walked with us through joy and sorrow, celebration and exhaustion, healing and growth. Through your presence, your prayers, and your faithfulness, we have experienced the love of Christ in tangible and life-changing ways.

Throughout our years at Anchor, the Lord has continually shown himself to be “the God of the more”—the One who is able to do far more abundantly than all we could ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20). We have witnessed lives transformed from the inside out, hearts awakened to the presence of God, and a generation of students set ablaze with a hunger for what is real and eternal. It has been a holy privilege to walk alongside so many of you as the Spirit has done His deep and beautiful work.

We are especially grateful for the community Anchor has been to our children. This church is home to them in a way that will forever shape who they are. The relationships, care, and spiritual foundation they have received here will remain a lasting gift. Likewise, the friendships Nikki and I have formed—many of which we know will last a lifetime—are treasures we carry with us into this next chapter.

While our role and primary place of ministry are changing, our hearts for Anchor remain the same. We are not going far, and we are committed to staying connected and continuing to co-labor as God brings revival and awakening to our city. We are filled with joy and anticipation for what the Lord is doing both here at Anchor and in this new season he has called us into.

Thank you for loving us so well. Thank you for trusting us, walking with us, and allowing us the joy of serving alongside you. We leave this season with full hearts, immense gratitude, and unshakable confidence that God will continue to do exceedingly more than we could ever imagine—here at Anchor Church and beyond.

With deep love and gratitude,
Stephen & Nikki Anderson

Special Testimonies

Eight Days of Hope

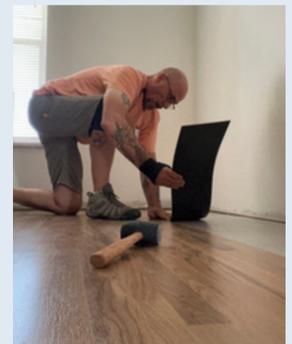
Eight Days of Hope is a faith-based volunteer organization that coordinates disaster relief, and our church has been blessed to participate in their efforts.

Their major ministries include: Disaster relief: responds nationwide to hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, etc. with rebuilding, rapid response and mass feeding. Safe house ministries: build or remodel safe houses for human trafficking survivors. Mass feeding: provide meals, showers and laundry after disasters.

Last year, we served on a team in Amory, Mississippi, following devastation from tornadoes. While I was there at 3am, two tornadoes touched down near us. This made our trip even more necessary. We helped with a massive volunteer effort to repair homes and support the community, involving over 1,800 volunteers from 39 states and Canada.

Our efforts included roofing, carpentry, porch fixes, and fence repairs for 110 families. They estimated the value of this work to be over \$2 million in repairs. July of 2025 was an annual trip to Buffalo, New York for summer projects to provide free home repairs for families in need. Eight Days of Hope mobilized 1,100 volunteers for comprehensive home make-overs, roof repairs and community revitalization. Through these efforts, Eight Days of Hope brings the hands and feet of Christ to the communities they serve.

Last year, we also partnered with ELIM, a local school for children with special needs. Dozens of volunteers from Anchor Church assisted at the annual picnic and Dutch Fest in 2025. Dutch Fest was a huge success for ELIM. Over 6,000 were in attendance for the one day event.



Irma Estrada



Many of you may know me from my work with student ministry, kids' ministry, or Anchor Church Berwyn. I was saved when I was eleven and grew up knowing the gospel. But as I grew older, I began making decisions based on my flesh rather than the Spirit. I became a prodigal child. In 2011, I had my first major wake-up call: a car accident that resulted in a two-year prison sentence. It was there that I truly learned the power of consistent prayer—or "24/7 prayer," as my mom and I like to call it. After my release, I returned to church but didn't fully engage; I continued to rely on my own strength instead of Jesus.

Then, in the summer of 2023, I was a victim of domestic violence. The last time I was in the hospital, the doctors told me it was a miracle I was alive. I had a severe bleed above my right eye that was slowing down and would heal on its own. That night, as I lay there praying to God, he spoke to me, loud and clear. I heard him say, "Aren't you tired of being a prodigal child?" That same night, I completely surrendered my life in full to Jesus and broke that cycle.

I came to Anchor Church Palos at the end of 2023 and started serving in student ministry and kids' ministry, and joined a small group. As I continued to restore my personal relationship with Jesus through prayer and reading the word, he continued to show me how much more I could do for him and his people. It has been four years since that night I totally surrendered. To God be all the glory! Because of him, his grace, and his love for me, I have been able to continue in his faithful ways. I am so blessed that the Anchor Church Palos pastors and community have been faithfully praying for me, even when I was lost. Now I am humbled and in awe of everything I am doing for my pastors and the Anchor Church Palos community.



Gill Family

After moving to the area in late 2024, we were in search of a new church. As we were driving home Sunday after the New Year, we passed by the bright blue sign of Anchor Church. We decided to look it up online and saw the live-stream sermon that day. We enjoyed Pastor Ryan's relatable and solid biblical teaching, but what impacted us the most was the Marathon Bible Reading that was starting that afternoon. We both thought it was a unique and somewhat crazy thing for a church to do.

Kristina's Story

I was reminded of the parable Jesus shared in Matthew 25:1-13 about the Ten Bridesmaids, which gave me the unction that this was a wise church that desires to keep their lamps oiled. I told myself I would show up to read early that week.

Wednesday morning, I randomly woke up at 4:00 am and was convicted by the Holy Spirit, "You said you were going to go read, but you haven't gone." Quickly, I calculated that I had enough time to go immediately, and still be able to get the kids ready for school later that morning. As I hurried, I felt the Lord say, "You can't rush the message I have for you, so you might as well slow down and enjoy the ride."

As I arrived at Anchor, Barb met me at the door and Stephen was sitting "crisscross applesauce" on the ground, which was a little weird but also comforting. When it was my turn to read, the Lord watered a beautiful seed he had already implanted in my heart through the very same scripture. Tears welled up around my eyes and I was only able to make it through one chapter. I attempted to leave as fast as possible, and never come back due to my embarrassment. Fortunately, Barb stopped me on the way out and took my phone number. When I arrived home, I shared with my husband the beautifully awkward experience. Joe expressed how nice that it was for me but showed no interest in going himself.

Joe's Story

After hearing Kristina's early morning experience, I left to drop our twins off at day care. I was intrigued by her story, and began questioning to myself whether I should go to Anchor to read a few chapters of scripture. I kept trying to convince myself that I didn't need to go. I made up excuses, thinking it would be "a waste of time". The Holy Spirit convicted me, "Maybe it will be a waste of time, maybe it won't. But if you don't go, you'll never know if I have a word I want to share with you." With that holy punch right to my gut, I turned around and drove to Anchor.

Nervously, I walked in, got in line, and took my turn to read a couple chapters in the book of Luke. The verses I read spoke to a situation I was wrestling with and gave me reassurance that God was hearing my prayers and was with me in the battle at that moment. More importantly, I looked out from the stage and truly felt the presence of the Holy Spirit in the building to the point that it triggered an emotional response from me. It confirmed for me that there was something special about Anchor Church Palos.

A few days later, Kristina received a message from Nikki Anderson. Coincidentally, we all knew each other from a church mission trip to Kenya we went on 12 years prior. This rapidly snowballed into us attending church, our kids loving Awana, serving, and becoming members of this beautiful community. Although no church is perfect, Anchor truly exemplifies a Healthy, Humble and Holy Church that we love to be a part of!

Sarah Ly and Decision Point

In August of 2025, I had the privilege of being hired by Decision Point. Looking back and reflecting on the path that led me to this ministry causes me to marvel at God's power, his perfect timing, and his sense of humor. Prior to the fall of 2022, I never wanted to be involved in youth ministry. I always felt called and gifted in worship ministry, and working with teenagers not only seemed scary, but I didn't think I had anything to offer to them.

But in the summer of 2022, Pastor Stephen and Nikki asked me to prayerfully consider joining the student ministry team. Even though I wanted to give them a quick, “no”, I did promise to pray about it. As I prayed, my desire for joining the ministry didn’t change (it was still a “no”) but I felt strongly the Lord was asking me to say, “yes.” Even though I didn’t understand why, or how this could relate to worship ministry, I agreed to join the team. The Lord quickly changed my heart from uninterested and resistant, to completely on fire and full of love for the students. A new passion was put in my heart to “tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done...so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments” (Psalm 78:4, 7).

While serving with student ministry I began to hear about **Decision Point**, but didn’t take much interest in it until I had a dream in September 2023 of standing in front of a high school. After that dream I began to think about Decision Point, and had a deep sense of certainty that I would somehow be involved in that ministry in the future. Over the next year and a half the Lord kept orchestrating conversations, events and interactions where Decision Point would come up over and over again. But instead of rushing into anything, I continued to trust in God’s timing and plan. I served with joy in Breakthrough and the worship team, witnessing true revival in the lives of so many. Then, in April of 2025, Mark Hopson and Dekota Johnson came to Anchor to speak about Decision Point during our church service. While they were talking I could feel my heart burning inside my chest as everything in me screamed, “this is what I want to do with my life!” I spent the next month wrestling with the Lord in prayer, asking him to give me permission and peace to apply for a job with Decision Point, trusting he would provide for the Anchor staff position I would be leaving. On Mother’s Day 2025, I finally felt peace from the Lord to apply for the job, and that very day my husband (who did not know I was ready to apply for the job) gave me a Mother’s Day drawing that had the Decision Point logo on it! From a dream to a drawing, the Lord clearly led me to Decision Point to continue to live out Psalm 78, and to use all that I have learned through student ministry at Anchor to continue to reach the next generation for Christ!



Decision Point Illinois Gospel Impact for 2025

- 67 Schools
- 142 Student Leaders
- 42 Church Partners
- 5,355 Outreach Event Attendees
- 482 Indicated First Time Decisions
- 664 Recommitments to Christ
- 5,951 Gospel Materials passed out.

Anchor Berwyn

Anchor Church Berwyn officially launched on September 28, and we are deeply grateful to Anchor Church Palos for the prayers, partnership, and support that made this work possible. Even before our public launch, God was already at work in and through the church. Our launch team was formed during a particularly challenging season, marked by uncertainty, hardship, and significant need within the community. Yet through these pressures, the Lord knit together a resilient and unified team with a shared calling—to bring the hope of the gospel to Berwyn.

Prior to our launch, Anchor Church Berwyn was already engaging the neighborhood and responding to moments of deep community pain. When a local school's vice principal was tragically gunned down in front of the school, Anchor Church Berwyn helped organize a prayer vigil that brought together over 350 people from the community to grieve, pray, and seek peace together. This gathering was made possible with the support and cooperation of the local police department, whom we value and support as servants committed to the safety and well-being of the city. That evening became a powerful reminder that the church has a vital role in moments of crisis—standing with the community and pointing to the hope found in Christ.

During this pre-launch season, we also faced skepticism and pushback from some in the local community who questioned our motives and expressed concern that we might take from Berwyn rather than invest in it. By God's grace, our response was not to defend ourselves with words but to continue showing up with faithful presence and genuine care. Even before launch day, Anchor Church Berwyn was committed to earning trust through consistent engagement and sacrificial service. Our public launch on September 28 was a joyful milestone, but it was quickly followed by new challenges and new opportunities to serve. The day after our launch, ICE raids took place in Berwyn, creating fear and uncertainty throughout the community and discouraging many from attending our still-budding church plant. Yet even in the midst of these challenges—and even during winter snowstorms—



Anchor Church Berwyn officially launched on September 25th. Anchor Church Berwyn continued to gather for worship, remaining committed to faithfulness and presence regardless of circumstances. In the weeks following our launch, Anchor Church Berwyn stepped into practical needs within the community. During the SNAP delay, when many families faced food insecurity, we partnered with other churches—including Anchor Church Palos and Evergreen Community Church—to distribute food boxes to families in need. We also partnered with local schools to provide winter coats, backpacks, and essential school supplies to children during a particularly vulnerable season. In addition, we joined with Children’s Hunger Fund to help provide ongoing food support for local children and families. Anchor Church Berwyn has also sought to engage the broader community through visible outreach. We participated in a local Berwyn 5K run, where we distributed over 5,000 invitations and gospel tracts to attendees, creating opportunities for gospel conversations and future connections with the church.

Despite these challenges, we are encouraged by what God is doing. People are slowly beginning to attend worship services. Relationships are forming. Trust is being built. The Lord is faithfully building his church. From the beginning, our vision has been clear: if people will not—or cannot—come to us, we will go to them. Anchor Church Berwyn continues to engage the community with the gospel through partnerships with local nonprofit organizations, the park district, and community groups. We are also creating opportunities for young adults from the community to work and serve throughout the week, with the ultimate goal that they would be exposed to Christians, hear the gospel, and come to saving faith in Christ. As we look ahead, we are preparing to relaunch Anchor Church Berwyn this Good Friday and Easter Sunday. These services represent a significant opportunity to once again invite the community to hear the gospel clearly and experience the life of the church. We humbly ask for Anchor Church Palos’ continued partnership—through prayer, encouragement, and help in spreading the word—as we seek to reintroduce the church to Berwyn and invite our neighbors to encounter Christ.

Our community is strong. Our church is active. And by God’s grace, Anchor Church Berwyn is taking the gospel into Berwyn through faithful presence, compassionate service, and enduring partnership. We are deeply thankful for Anchor Church Palos and for the role you continue to play in what God is doing in Berwyn.





Send Network

Send is our primary network in Chicago, which gives us a family of 150 diverse churches. 2025 was a great year, as we met for fellowship and collaborated on church planting. Pastor Ryan trained 8 planters across the Chicagoland area. Pastor Bill Ibarra completed this training program and planted Anchor Church Berwyn! We also participated in some city service opportunities through Anchor Berwyn. We see great potential to impact our city through the Send Network, and we have the honor of playing a lead role in Send's strategy this year.



Hands on Africa

Hands On Africa is committed to living out Christ's love and sharing the Gospel wherever God opens doors—through church planting, leadership training, education, medical care, and compassionate outreach across Africa. By God's grace, thousands of churches have been planted, and over 1,300 seminary students are currently being trained, with more than 1,300 graduates serving across multiple African nations.

Their ministry includes schools, orphan care, widow and women's rescue centers, medical clinics serving tens of thousands, and farming projects that promote long-term sustainability. Through initiatives like Life Abundantly, they disciple families while equipping them for self-sufficiency, always pairing practical help with the hope of the Gospel.

For nearly 29 years, God has faithfully provided beyond expectations. In 2025, he supplied far more than their budgeted needs, enabling expanded ministry and transformed lives. As they look to 2026, they continue to trust him as new doors open in Uganda, Nigeria, and Burundi—where plans are underway for a Rescue Center serving 200 street children.

Thank you to Anchor Palos for being part of this testimony, all for the glory of Jesus Christ.



Sierra Leone Outreach June 2025

Our June 2025 outreach to Sierra Leone was filled with joy, faith, and life-changing moments. The children at the orphanage delighted in simple gifts like toiletries, clothing, snacks, and toys, along with fun activities, games, and LEGO building. Each evening, the team gathered for heartfelt devotions, worship, and lessons that deepened relationships and faith.



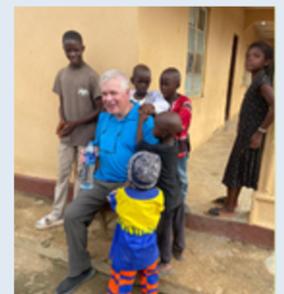
One especially moving moment was during worship, as children responded emotionally to God's presence. We are deeply grateful to our team, whose hard work made this outreach possible.

Highlights included a friendly soccer match, the gift of laptops to college students, and educational support at the local elementary school. Our team's teachers helped observe and strengthen classroom instruction at the request of the village chief.

One Team member shared how deeply she was impacted by the children's joy, faith, and love for Christ. She also highlighted moments of learning about God's provision through nature and education.

The team shared the Gospel through creative teaching, including butterfly illustrations and Gospel bracelets. Several individuals made decisions to follow Jesus. Despite travel challenges, the team brought church to the village of Pendembu-Ngeibla, where many residents have not yet heard the Gospel. We were also encouraged by dedicated Bible School students, including Abdulai, who faithfully attended Gospel teaching despite coming from a Muslim background. We ask for continued prayer for his spiritual journey.

Anchor Palos continues to invest in home and world missions. Thank you for partnering with us in being the hands and feet of Jesus.



Pastor Alex



Dear Anchor Church family,

I would like to share with you a testimony about ministry in Ukraine and about an incredible miracle and blessing from the Lord — that I am now here with you.

As you know, since February 2022, Ukraine has been living under the reality of war. Air raids, missile strikes, and drone attacks have become a constant part of everyday life. Because of repeated attacks on the energy infrastructure, electricity is often cut off, and homes are left without heat and light — even charging a phone becomes a challenge. It is also dangerous for men to be outside during the day, and some people are unable to attend church gatherings during this time. In the midst of these difficult circumstances, our church in Kyiv has continued to serve the people around us. Many refugees from the eastern regions, where the front line passes, fled to Kyiv with almost nothing. As a church, we sought to bring them the love of Christ in both practical and spiritual ways — through food packages, gifts, children's camps, care, support, and most importantly, through the proclamation of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

During these years, I was separated from my family for nearly four years. Because of government restrictions, men under sixty were not allowed to leave the country. Yet through your prayers and by a special miracle from God — a miracle that Pastor Ryan and I prayed for and believed God could accomplish — the Lord opened a way. In October, God made it possible for me to come and be reunited with my family and to be here with you.

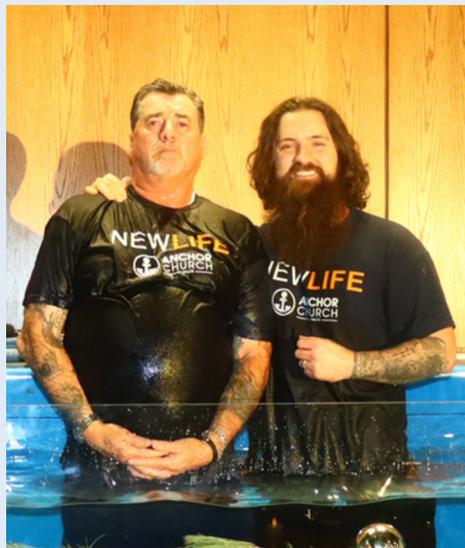
It is a tremendous blessing to be under peaceful skies, surrounded by loving people, serving together with you, and experiencing your warmth, care, and fellowship — especially during these precious Christmas days. I have also been blessed to visit many Bible study groups and to meet personally with so many of you. These meetings have been a special encouragement and support to my heart.

I want to express deep gratitude first to the Lord, and also to each of you who have supported, prayed, and stood with me and with my family throughout these years. May the Lord abundantly bless each one of you.

Pastor Alex Tarasov



Baptisms





1,000 Day Vision Recap

In the fall of 2022, the elders of ACP prayed for God to give us a vision for fulfilling the Great Commission. Pastor Ryan invited the church to pray for clarity, we conducted a church-wide survey, we invited an outside organization to conduct a church health assessment, and we compiled everything in a 1,000-day Strategic Plan.

We aimed to become a holy, healthy, humble spiritual community. We also aimed to reach 500,000 people with the Gospel in the 40 cities we bordered. It was a God-sized vision. We launched the vision Easter weekend of 2023. We celebrated the completion of this bold vision with a New Year's Eve party last year, and we watched the 1,000-day countdown clock expire. God blew us away. In my final sermon of 2025, I shared "1,000 Days of Praise."

Over the Past 3 Years

Launched Anchor Berwyn

God worked a true miracle by opening a way for Pastor Alex to be reunited with his family.

Baptized
66 people

Welcomed
74 New
Members

Raised over
\$145,000
for our
Global Fund

Raised
\$119,000
for the
Building
Fund

100 Students Attended our Unashamed Conference

Launched Anchor Español

Joined Send Network Chicago

Held 2 drama performances

Men's Ministry Soared

Sent our first missions teams to Africa

Handed out thousands of invitations/tracts

Launched findgodagain.com

Served with 8 Days of Hope

Saw many kids saved at VBS

Women's Ministry Bloomed

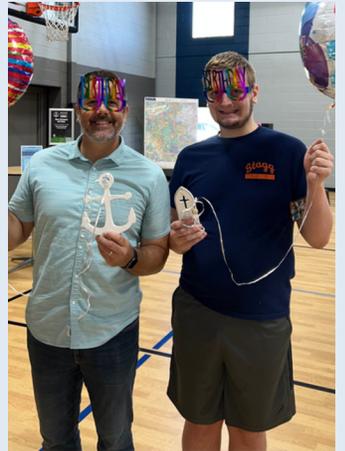
Studied the book of Acts and the Gospel of Mark

Read through the entire Bible out loud

Handed out over 500 ribbons saying: "Here I am, Send Me!"

We are amazed at what God accomplished over the past 3 years, and we can't wait for God to lead us into our next bold vision for the coming 3 years!

FIND *God* AGAIN
HERE I AM SEND ME! ISAIAH 6:8







ANCHOR
CHURCH
PALOS