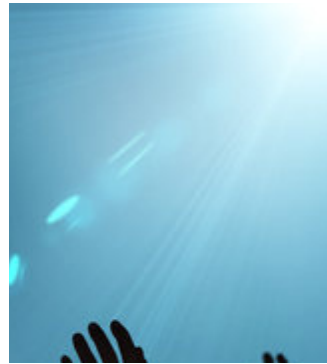


ROOTED IN FAITH GROWING IN HOPE

*THE FIRST 60 YEARS OF
FOOTHILLS ALLIANCE CHURCH*

1965-2025

Foothills Alliance Church 60th Anniversary History

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These are exciting days for the Foothills Alliance Church family as we prepare to celebrate our 60th Anniversary in October 2025. Anniversaries are natural times to pause—to look back with gratitude, to take stock of where we are today and to prayerfully discern where God is leading us into the future. As someone once said, it is important to think about our future because that is where we will spend the rest of our lives. Yet while the future is still being written, it is equally important to tell the story of our past—our story—because it reminds us of God’s faithfulness across generations.

Foothills was birthed in 1965, one hundred years after A.B. Simpson, founder of the Christian & Missionary Alliance, was ordained into ministry. From his humble beginnings on Prince Edward Island, Simpson carried a passion to see people encounter both the saving touch of Jesus and the sanctifying work of the Spirit. He did not envision simply creating another denomination, but a gospel movement—a fellowship of kindred hearts from every background united in the Great Commission to “go and make disciples of all nations.” Today, that vision has expanded into an international family of more than 22,000 churches in 88 countries, with over six million members worldwide. The heartbeat of Simpson’s vision still pulses through Foothills as we serve Calgary and beyond.

In Joshua 4 we read of the Israelites standing at the edge of the Promised Land after decades of wandering. When God miraculously parted the Jordan River, He instructed one man from each tribe to carry a stone from the riverbed. These twelve stones were set up at Gilgal as a memorial to future generations—a tangible testimony that “the Lord’s hand is powerful” (Joshua 4:24). In much the same way, the story of Foothills is filled with its own memorial stones—moments when God’s presence, provision and power have been unmistakably clear. The very bricks that form the building stand as a visible reminder of His faithfulness to this congregation and community.

This history is not meant to be exhaustive, but it is meant to inspire gratitude and stir memory. Within these pages you will meet some of the “heavy lifters” who carried the vision of Foothills forward, along with many whose lives were changed along the way. As you read, may you be reminded of your own stories and the part you play in this unfolding legacy. And as we celebrate our 60th year, may these stories strengthen our faith to step boldly into the future that God is preparing for us.

Special thanks go to Jake Hiebert and former Pastor Steve Elliott for documenting the early years of Foothills from 1965 to 2000; to the many members and staff who contributed their memories from the past 25 years; and to those who have carefully gathered, scanned and preserved annual reports and pictures to help bring this history together. Without these voices and records, our story would be far less complete.

Heather and I have had the privilege of calling Foothills home for the past 20 years. We have seen firsthand the faith, perseverance and generosity of this church family and we count it an honour to share this journey with you. Together, we look forward with anticipation to all that God has yet to reveal to us—and through us—in the years ahead.

Rev. Dr. Tim Beadle

Between 1960 and 1965, Calgary was a city on the move. Fueled by an oil and gas boom, the population swelled by nearly 30% in just five years—from 262,000 to over 320,000. New neighbourhoods were carved from farmland, show homes lined the streets and prefabricated materials made construction faster than ever before. Developers could barely keep pace with the demand. At the same time, Calgary's downtown was being reshaped by redevelopment projects such as Palliser Square, which aimed to modernize the core and attract oil companies to set up offices. The city was fast becoming a major financial hub in Western Canada. Even the Calgary Stampede reflected the growing profile of the city, with Walt Disney serving as parade marshal in 1965. Calgary still cherished its cowboy image, but it was quickly becoming cosmopolitan.

It was within this time of rapid growth and transformation that the story of Foothills Alliance Church began. At the time, First Alliance Church on 17th Avenue SW was the only Alliance congregation in the city. Its members were sensing the need for a new expression of ministry in the north. The District Superintendent, Rev. Roy McIntyre, known for his pioneering spirit, encouraged church leaders to look "north of the Bow River" and consider planting a new congregation in Calgary's expanding northwest.

A survey was circulated among First Alliance members and the results were telling: more than 20 families from the northwest indicated they were eager to form a new church closer to their homes. For years they had faithfully traveled across the city every Sunday, but the opportunity to serve and witness in their own neighborhoods stirred excitement. Still, some in the leadership of First Alliance hesitated. Planting a new church meant releasing committed families and leaders from the established congregation. It was a costly decision.

In the end, the vision for expansion prevailed. Permission was granted and those families were released with a sense of mission. They were not merely leaving one church to join another; they were venturing out to start something new, with faith that God would use them to establish a gospel presence in the growing northwest corner of Calgary.



On Sunday, October 3, 1965, the first public service of what would become Foothills Alliance Church was held in the Banff Trail Community Centre. Leading the new congregation was Pastor James McNair, who had been called to shepherd the group of families released from First Alliance. Attendance that day was around 30–40 people—a small gathering compared to the city’s rapid growth, but one rich with vision and determination. On the third Sunday the church gathered, the Love family began attending and several years later their son Rick would serve as Pastor of Intercultural Ministries!



Pastor James McNair

Those who were there often described the atmosphere as a “family reunion.” The group was small enough to know each other well, but large enough to sense that God was birthing something new. Services were simple, with one large room in the community hall serving every purpose. Soon after, Sunday morning services moved to Branton Junior High School, while evening services were held at St. Cyprian’s Anglican Church hall. It was a nomadic beginning, but the people carried with them a sense of unity and mission.



The chicken farm purchased along Crowchild Trail in the church’s life.

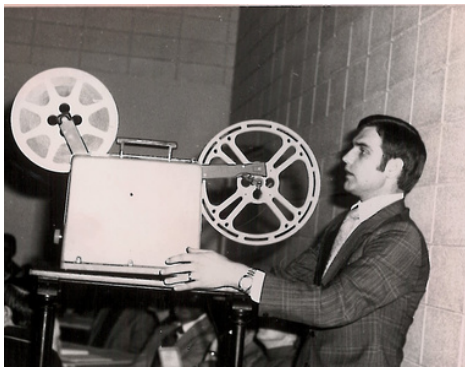
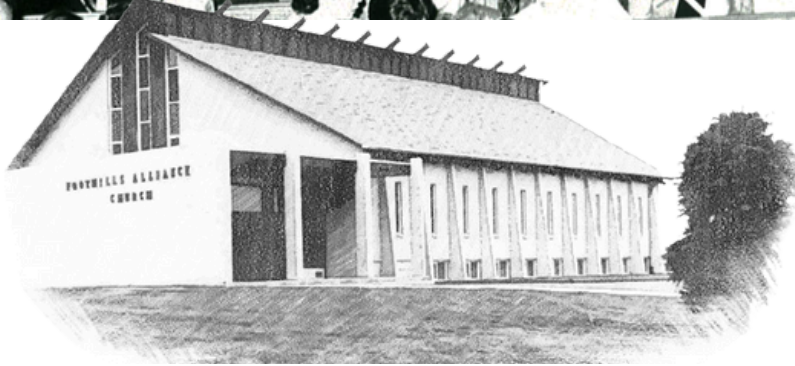
By 1966, news spread that a parcel of farmland (a chicken farm to be exact) on Morley Trail was available for purchase. Ernie Matchullis brought it to the attention of church leadership, noting that although the City of Calgary was interested in acquiring the land, the owner was willing to sell to the Christian & Missionary Alliance. With financial assistance from the Western Canadian District, First Alliance Church and a grant from another arm of the C&MA, Foothills Alliance was able to acquire the land—an incredible provision at such an early stage

Not long after, part of the Morley Trail property was sold to Shell Oil, providing the funds needed to construct Foothills’ first sanctuary. At a cost of \$100,000, the building was completed in time for the first service on December 18, 1966. The church was officially dedicated on January 27, 1967, with 67 members and 150 adherents. For the congregation, this was no small accomplishment—they had moved from meeting in borrowed spaces to worshipping in a permanent home in just over a year.

Pastor McNair proved to be exactly the leader the young congregation needed. An experienced pastor with a reputation for being deeply spiritual and pastoral, he was described as a true shepherd. He cared for people individually and was faithful in prayer. Orlo Harris recalled how McNair visited him in the hospital every week for five months following a serious accident. Once a month, he even brought members of the church along so they could celebrate communion together.

Because many of the families in those early years were young couples, the church developed a strong sense of family. Pastor McNair intentionally fostered this spirit of unity. There was a shared vision to “get a church started and going.” Everyone pitched in. Each person carried a sense of responsibility for the mission.

Charter members like Jake and Elaine Hiebert remembered those days as both chaotic and exhilarating. There was little structure, but there was clarity of purpose. Even the challenges were embraced as opportunities. As one young member, Marilyn Wallace, later reflected, “It wasn’t about joining something that already existed—it was about creating something new.” That sense of adventure carried the congregation through the inevitable struggles of starting fresh.



Pastor John Robb



Pastor Albert McVety



In the fall of 1970, after Pastor McNair had retired, Pastor Gordon Fowler arrived from Hawaii to take up the role of Senior Pastor at Foothills Alliance Church. For Gordon, this was something of a homecoming—he had been born in Calgary and returning to shepherd a congregation in his hometown felt like a full-circle moment. He and his wife, Eleanor, along with their three children, settled just a few blocks from the church's Morley Trail location.

Pastor Fowler's arrival coincided with a spiritual stirring that was happening across North America. A revival known as "One Divine Moment" was spreading throughout the southern United States, marked by renewed prayer, repentance and testimonies of God's transforming power. Fowler observed this movement closely and within his first year at Foothills, God began to move in a similar way among the congregation.

It began when a visiting student—connected to the revival in the U.S.—was invited to share his testimony one Sunday evening. What followed was an outpouring of confession, repentance, and worship. For two weeks after, every service concluded with people coming forward to share what God was doing in their lives. Testimonies flowed freely. People wept, prayed, and reconciled relationships. Fowler later reflected that this two-week period accomplished what "might otherwise have taken years of preaching and teaching." God knit the church together in unity of spirit, preparing them for the next season of ministry.

The 1970s became a period of equipping and mobilization for Foothills Alliance. Pastor Fowler carried a strong vision: that every believer was called to ministry and that the role of pastors was to equip the saints for works of service (Ephesians 4:12). As a result, numerous lay-led ministries were born during this decade. Groups like Alliance Youth Fellowship, Pioneer Girls and Christian Service Brigade gave young people a place to grow in faith and leadership. A thriving College & Career ministry disciplined students and young professionals. Members were encouraged to identify their gifts and step into service, whether in teaching, hospitality, evangelism or music.



Pastor Gordon Fowler



Music and worship were particularly significant in this era. The Ehrhart family brought dynamic musical leadership and choirs became a central part of worship services. Special concerts and guest musicians often filled the sanctuary, adding to the vibrancy of worship.

One striking example of the impact of these ministries came through Camp Chamisall, the C&MA's district camp in the Waiparous Valley. Many Foothills families sent their children there, including the Trigg family. It was at Chamisall in the early 1970s that a 13-year-old Ian Trigg had a personal encounter with God that changed the trajectory of his life—a seed planted that would later grow into his own pastoral calling.



Pastor Fowler's ministry was also outward-looking. Evangelism became a driving force, with the church engaging tools like Campus Crusade for Christ and Evangelism Explosion to train members in sharing their faith. The heartbeat of the church was not simply to grow in numbers, but to see people come into a saving relationship with Jesus.

The church itself also began to grow numerically. Between 1971 and 1978, attendance nearly doubled—from 350 to 650 people. This growth created practical challenges. In 1974, Foothills completed an addition of Christian Education facilities to keep pace with its expanding ministries. The building provided much-needed classrooms and space for children and youth programs, which were bursting with energy and life.

Perhaps one of Pastor Fowler's greatest legacies was his willingness to release people into ministry beyond Foothills. Under his leadership, the church became a hub for church planting. In 1973, Foothills partnered with the District to help launch Rockyview Alliance Church in northeast Calgary. In 1979, Foothills was instrumental in birthing Cochrane Alliance Church. Later, congregations in Huntington Hills (later Harvest Hills Alliance) and Bow Valley (later RockPointe Church) would also trace their roots back to Foothills. Fowler often said he received "freshness" from these new starts, believing that the Kingdom of God was advanced when churches multiplied.

By the end of the decade, Foothills Alliance had matured into a vibrant, outward-focused church with a growing impact in northwest Calgary and beyond. Pastor Fowler himself was remembered as a caring shepherd with a visionary spirit. He could rally people around new ideas, inspire confidence in God's leading and encourage others to step into roles of leadership.

The years of equipping and expansion under Gordon Fowler set the stage for the decades to come. Yet, as with many growing churches, new seasons would bring fresh challenges. In January 1979, Pastor Fowler accepted a call to serve as District Superintendent of the C&MA in British Columbia.

When Pastor Gordon Fowler accepted the call to serve as District Superintendent of British Columbia in January 1979, Foothills Alliance celebrated his new opportunity even as they felt the loss of a deeply loved shepherd. Under his leadership, the church had experienced nearly a decade of growth, vision and spiritual renewal. His departure marked the close of a significant chapter in Foothills' story and the beginning of a new one—a season of transition that invited the congregation to lean on God's guidance in fresh ways. In the years that followed, the church family walked through change and challenge, yet these experiences would ultimately shape Foothills' character and deepen its dependence on God's faithfulness.

The first to follow Pastor Fowler was Pastor John Robb, who arrived in 1979. Known for his thoughtful and capable biblical teaching, Pastor Robb brought a different style of leadership to Foothills—one that emphasized depth in Scripture and clear doctrinal communication. His approach contrasted with Pastor Fowler's more relational and visionary style, marking a season of transition and adjustment for the congregation. During this time, Lloyd Anderson joined the staff as music and youth pastor. A Bible college graduate from Winnipeg, Lloyd and his wife Sharon came to Calgary with great enthusiasm. Even his hiring reflected the diverse perspectives within church leadership at the time, as leaders worked through differing expectations and traditions as one elder insisted that Lloyd shave off his beard before accepting the role.

Despite the challenges, music remained a central expression of worship at Foothills during this era. Choirs, quartets and special musical guests continued to shape the Sunday experience, thanks in part to the dedicated ministry of families like the Ehrharts. During this season, the church experienced some growing pains as differing perspectives within leadership began to surface. In June 1981, both Pastor John Robb and Lloyd Anderson concluded their roles within weeks of each other. While these transitions were challenging for the congregation, they also reflected a community in the midst of change and seeking God's direction for the future. Lloyd would later return as part-time music director, continuing to serve with dedication and joy for many years—an enduring reminder of God's grace and faithfulness through seasons of transition.



Later in 1981, Pastor Al McVety became Senior Pastor, with Lionel Hopkins providing additional pastoral support. Pastor McVety brought a warm and personable presence to Foothills. Loved by families and children alike, he quickly became affectionately known as the “cookie man,” always keeping treats on hand for his young visitors. His ministry was marked by genuine care for people and a desire to be available and approachable to those he served.

The early 1980s were a period of transition for Foothills. Following a decade of steady growth, the church found itself navigating questions of identity and direction. While Pastor McVety’s caring leadership provided stability and encouragement for many, the congregation as a whole wrestled with finding a clear and shared vision for the future. Attendance began to fluctuate, as church membership dropped from 203 to 144 (from 1985–1987) and attendance from 585 in 1983 to 265 in 1988; the sense of momentum and unity that had characterized the 1970s waned.

The church still had dedicated charter members and committed families, but their resolve was being tested. By the mid-1980s, Foothills entered what some would later describe as “a season of survival”; a challenging season of perseverance and faith. The church continued to be blessed with devoted members and families who loved their community deeply, even as they faced uncertainty and change. Though these years tested the congregation’s endurance, they also laid the groundwork for renewal in the seasons to come.

Even in the turbulence, however, God was at work. The congregation was being refined, learning hard lessons about faith, perseverance and what it truly meant to be a community. While the external reputation suffered, within the church there remained a remnant of prayerful, steadfast believers who refused to give up on the vision of a thriving gospel witness in northwest Calgary.

By 1987, the Board of Elders recognized the need for a new vision and a new kind of leadership. After a season of prayer and discernment, they cast a fresh vision statement: “To become a lighthouse church in the northwest.” The words carried hope. But vision alone was not enough—they would need a leader who could embody it and unite the congregation behind it. That leader, Pastor Steve Elliott would arrive in December 1987. In the meantime Pastor Les Bon Bernard provided interim pastoral support.



Lloyd Anderson and Pastor Steve Elliott



On December 15, 1987, Pastor Steve Elliott accepted the call to become Senior Pastor of Foothills Alliance Church. At the time, he was serving at Stony Plain Alliance in Alberta and had built deep roots with that congregation. Initially, Steve and his wife Marilyn hesitated to leave, but after further conversations with District leadership, they sensed God's clear leading to Foothills. Their arrival marked the beginning of a new era—one defined by renewed vision, relational leadership, and steady growth.

Foothills was ready. The people had already embraced a fresh vision "to become a lighthouse church in the northwest," but they needed a leader who could embody it, communicate it clearly and rally the congregation around it. Steve Elliott was exactly that leader. Known as a relevant communicator with a strong pastoral heart, he quickly gained trust and inspired confidence. Marilyn, deeply grounded in theology and Scripture herself, became a vital partner in ministry. Together, they brought stability and hope after years of turbulence.

Almost immediately, the church began to grow. Attendance, which had dipped in the early 1980s, rose steadily—from 383 in 1987 to 650 by 1990. The worship services took on a new vibrancy, with children's moments, testimonies and biblical preaching that combined clarity with humour and practical application. Elliott would often say on baptism Sundays, "It's a great day for the Kingdom!" as he celebrated personal testimonies of transformed lives.

Prayer became a central part of the church's identity. Many new believers described Foothills as a place of authenticity and care, where people prayed for one another earnestly. One young adult, Elizabeth Matthias, remembered being struck by the genuine intercession of church members during her early visits. Though at first surprised by Elliott's humour in sermons, she soon came to cherish Foothills as her home church. In time, she became a missionary in Munich, Germany—and is still supported faithfully by Foothills.

By the early 1990s, it became clear that Foothills had outgrown its Morley Trail building. The congregation was once again preparing for a bold step of faith.

In January 1991, Foothills began holding services at Sir Winston Churchill High School as plans for a new facility took shape. For the next three years, the church was displaced from its building and the reality of meeting in a school—with weekly setup and teardown for Sunday worship—was a significant challenge for the congregation. Pastor Elliott recalls individuals such as Joy Epp, Darrell Fowler and Duane Van Winkle as being central to holding things together during this season of construction.

The Morley Trail property was sold to Rocky Mountain College in March and by July land negotiations for a new site in Edgemont were underway.

Construction began the following year under Pichler and Sons. The process was not without challenges—steel prices skyrocketed and at one point the project had to pause for lack of funds. Yet, God provided. In one creative fundraising effort, families were asked to donate \$50 for each chair their household would occupy in the new sanctuary.



unless it's the Lord who builds the house, the builders labor in vain

psalm 127:1

Jake Hiebert was central in negotiating a major land deal with neighbour Superstore who needed an extra 55 feet of land to complete their project. At \$20,000 a foot, Jake took leadership in closing the deal, which included Superstore agreeing to remove a large mound of dirt from the property that had caused angst to Foothills Leadership. At one point, leadership considered asking church families to bring an empty pail to take dirt home with them each week!

On August 1993, the first service was held in the new building at 333 Edgepark Boulevard NW. It was a milestone moment: Foothills Alliance Church had a new home in a growing community and momentum was building once again.

Alongside the new facility, another ministry was born that would prove to be one of Foothills' most enduring outreaches: the Foothills Preschool.

While the church was still meeting in Churchill High School, conversations had begun about establishing a Christ-centered preschool as part of the new facility. Despite numerous hurdles—including financial pressures and the extensive licensing requirements of Social Services—the dream pressed forward. Approvals were finally granted in early 1993, after inspections from health and fire officials and the completion of curriculum and policy handbooks.

On a cold February day in 1993, registration for the preschool's first "crop" of students took place under a tarp, with heaters blasting because the roof had not yet been completed. That fall—simultaneous with the opening of the new church building—the preschool launched with four full classes, each at capacity with 24 students. The following year, a kindergarten program was added. Over time, the preschool expanded to 11 classes weekly, serving more than 250 children. For many families in the surrounding community—most of them unchurched—the preschool became their first introduction to Foothills Alliance. Through word of mouth alone, parents eagerly lined up for registration, sometimes waiting for hours in advance. Many later made Foothills their church home. In 2004, during a church expansion, the preschool moved into a bright, purpose-built facility. This affirmed its role as a vital ministry of Foothills—shaping young lives, blessing families and opening doors to the gospel. For over three decades, the preschool has remained a hallmark of Foothills' outreach to the community.

Jake Hiebert, who was serving as Executive Pastor at the time, became deeply involved in the ministry of the school and went on to serve as its principal for many years. His steady leadership and guiding influence were instrumental in the school's growth and lasting impact.

Through the 1990s, Foothills flourished in its new location. Attendance climbed steadily, reaching 713 by 1993 and 1,200 by 2000. Staff expanded to meet ministry needs, growing from a handful to a team of seven pastors and five support staff. Steve Elliott's leadership, complemented by gifted associates like Matt Boda, created a strong pastoral culture. Lay leaders were empowered, small groups multiplied and global missions remained central.

Pastor Matt Boda was hired to bring more depth to the pastoral staff and was a strong relational influence in the church. He invited a neighbour to attend the college and career program, which she did. She kept coming to the church and four years later she met her future husband! Today Lori and Andy Numrich and their two adult sons continue to attend all because of the invitation from a neighbour to attend. Such invitations were being made by dozens of church members to their friends and neighbours.

Theologically, Elliott invested in the next generation of leaders. Through the Beeson program at Asbury Theological Seminary, he not only completed doctoral studies but also helped connect many Canadian pastors—including several future Foothills staff members—with similar advanced training. These included pastors Boda, Orthner, Paton and Trigg. His influence extended beyond Foothills into the broader Alliance family.

Yet even in this season of fruitfulness, challenges arose. In 1995, Elliott took a sabbatical, during which leadership voids created tensions. The rise of the Toronto Blessing movement drew some members away, leading to the formation of a short-lived independent ministry called The Gathering. Though painful, the episode refined Foothills' sense of identity and deepened its commitment to being a lighthouse church for its community.

By November 2000, Pastor Elliott accepted a call to lead First Alliance Church in Lexington, Kentucky. His departure marked the close of a significant chapter. Under his leadership, Foothills had grown in numbers, influence and spiritual vitality. The lighthouse vision had been realized, and the congregation stood poised for the next season of ministry.



The story of the next Lead Pastor of Foothills Alliance Church and the connection between the two begins much earlier, in the 1970s, when a young boy named Ian Trigg attended Camp Chamisall with his brother. His mother, Shirley, had sent both boys so she could enjoy a brief rest at home. It was there, at age 13, that Ian had a personal encounter with God that would shape the rest of his life. Foothills Alliance Church was already part of Ian's spiritual story long before he ever imagined becoming its Lead Pastor.

By the late 1990s, Ian had pursued theological training at Canadian Bible College, served in ministry and pastored at Vernon Alliance in British Columbia. Meanwhile, Steve Elliott—who had been one of Ian's early influences—once remarked at a conference that Ian might one day be a good fit to succeed him. Years later, when Elliott concluded his ministry at Foothills in 2000, that suggestion became reality. After prayer and discernment, the church extended the call, and in 2001 Ian, his wife Joyce and their family returned to Calgary.

From the outset, Pastor Ian's ministry was marked by a deeply pastoral and relational spirit. Known for his remarkable memory of names and details, he made it a priority to connect personally with people. Many remember him standing in the church lobby after services, greeting everyone with warmth and genuine interest. His preaching carried biblical depth and heartfelt application, but it was his shepherd's heart that most clearly defined his leadership.

These years were characterized by his steady and caring presence. Stories still circulate of hospital visits, handwritten notes and quiet words of encouragement offered during moments of crisis. Through these simple yet meaningful acts, many experienced God's love in tangible ways. Joyce also played an integral role, investing in relationships and supporting Ian's ministry with grace and hospitality. Together, they embodied a pastoral family that welcomed people into the life of the church.

Pastor Ian's teaching also left a lasting imprint. Rooted in Scripture, his sermons emphasized grace, community, and discipleship, often weaving humour and authenticity that made the gospel come alive. Under his leadership, Foothills grew not only in size but in spirit—becoming known as a large church with the heart of a caring family.

Ian was intentional about surrounding himself with capable leaders. Early in his tenure, James Paton joined as Associate Pastor and together they formed a dynamic partnership. Their humour and camaraderie on stage reassured the congregation of their unity.

In time, Foothills was blessed with a variety of gifted leaders who enriched the pastoral team and helped shape the church's ministries. New staff brought strengths in evangelism, children's ministry, youth & young adults ministry, men's & women's ministries, marriage ministry, senior's ministry and spiritual formation, while others provided valuable leadership in administration, pastoral care and compassion, life groups, missions and worship.

The church also continued to be strengthened by the faithful service of dedicated lay leaders and board members. Their prayerful guidance and steady commitment helped Foothills navigate important decisions and remain rooted in its mission through seasons of change. One of the most significant was the move toward an egalitarian stance on leadership—opening the way for women not only to serve on the board but also to be ordained. Over the years, four women were ordained from the Foothills platform: Miriam Charter, Patricia Love, Carla Olsen Draper and Ruth-Anne Gilbertson.

Throughout the 2000s and 2010s, Foothills Alliance continued to grow in both size and scope. Even during seasons of challenge, the church remained steadfast. The 2008 financial crisis tested resources, but faithful giving and prudent stewardship sustained ministries. Attendance averaged over 1,200 by the mid-2000s, prompting conversations about facility expansion. This led to the Family Ministry Centre, completed in 2009, which added more than 36,000 square feet dedicated to youth, children and family programming. The Prayer Chapel and expanded gym became central spaces for ministry and community engagement.

The church also clarified its mission and vision through initiatives like the 6.10 Strategy, drawn from Matthew 6:10: “Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” This framework emphasized evangelism, biblical community and transformational service. Alpha became a cornerstone for outreach, while life groups multiplied, drawing hundreds into deeper discipleship.

By 2010, the church had grown into a truly intergenerational and intercultural community. Under the leadership of Patti Love, Foothills’ Intercultural Ministry blossomed through creative planning and dynamic leadership. Years earlier, she had submitted to the board a paper outlining what it would mean for Foothills to fully embrace an intercultural focus in ministry. Today, the ministry is led by her husband, Pastor Rick Love, while together Patti and Rick continue to direct their Love New Canadians ministry, which has expanded across Canada and beyond.

In 2013–2015, a major roof renovation required significant fundraising, but the congregation responded generously, covering the project without additional long-term debt. Plus, we will never forget the Calgary Flood of 2013 as our congregation engaged with relief for the entire community. Through these years, Foothills lived out its identity as a “lighthouse church in the northwest.” Worship services were vibrant, children’s and youth programs flourished and volunteers served faithfully across every ministry. The Foothills Preschool continued to thrive, with enrolment often exceeding 200 children each year. Large outreach events like the Family Carnival and seasonal productions drew thousands from the surrounding community.

During this time, Foothills Alliance entered a unique season where creativity and the arts found fresh expression in worship and outreach. The church embraced the vision that the gospel could be communicated not only through preaching and song, but also through visual art, drama, and storytelling. These creative expressions became powerful tools for discipleship and evangelism, helping people experience the beauty of God’s story in new and meaningful ways.

Christmas and Easter productions became significant highlights of this season. They drew together volunteers from across the congregation—actors, set builders, costume makers, painters, musicians and behind-the-scenes crew—all united by a shared desire to tell the story of Jesus through the gifts God had given them. These collaborative efforts created a deep sense of community, as the church worked side by side to share the message of hope with the broader Calgary community.

This chapter in Foothills’ history reflected a deep conviction that worship is multi-dimensional—engaging the heart, mind and imagination. By giving space for creativity to flourish, the church celebrated God’s redemptive story in ways that touched both participants and guests alike.

The impact of this creative era continues to echo in the life of the church. It stands as a reminder that God delights in the diverse gifts of His people and that art in all its forms—painting, drama, music and more—can be a powerful expression of His glory and grace.

The 2017–2018 ministry year was shaped by a return to our “why”—a reflective call from Romans 12 to live transformed lives in contrast to the patterns of the world. Rather than consume spiritual goods, we were invited into a journey of offering ourselves fully to God. The Transforming Journey continued to guide our mission through four key expressions: Knowing God, Loving Others, Reaching Neighbours and Serving the World. From Alpha to Life Groups, from Intercultural Ministries to Children and Youth, every effort flowed from this core vision. A defining milestone of the year was the launch of Glacier Ridge Church, our first daughter church in over three decades. What began with a board decision in 2016 culminated in public services, led by Pastor Cam Loewen in September 2018, following months of leadership development, prayer and community engagement. Foothills also supported Horizon Church, led by Pastor Nathan Hildebrandt, which saw 60% growth, three Alpha courses and its first baptism.

Just as Foothills was moving forward with fresh momentum, the world changed overnight. In March 2020, the global COVID-19 pandemic forced churches across Canada to close their doors and suspend in-person gatherings. For the first time in its history, Foothills could not gather physically as a congregation. What had once been routine—worshipping together in the Worship Centre, greeting one another in the lobby, serving side by side in ministry—was suddenly taken away.

Foothills quickly pivoted to online ministry, experimenting with livestreams, pre-recorded services and new ways of connecting digitally. Staff and volunteers who had never considered themselves “tech experts” became video editors, sound technicians and online hosts. What once took months of planning was often executed in just days. Though exhausting, these efforts reflected the deep desire to remain connected as a church family.

The transition was not without challenges. Longstanding traditions—such as the Easter drama, Christmas productions and large fellowship events—were cancelled, scaled back, or reimaged in creative ways. The absence of gathering created a longing to be together again. At the same time, attendance patterns shifted dramatically. Some people engaged faithfully online, while others drifted. Volunteers, once the backbone of many ministries, were harder to mobilize. By the second year of the pandemic, the strain on leaders and staff was deeply felt.



And yet, even in the midst of disruption, God’s faithfulness was evident. Online services reached people who had never before stepped inside the church building. Alpha and life groups were hosted virtually, drawing participants from across the city and beyond. Compassion ministries adapted to meet practical needs, providing care packages and prayers for families in crisis. Members reached out to neighbours in creative ways, showing that the gospel is not confined to a building.





Pastor Carla Olsen Draper



Pastor Ian Trigg



Pastor Tim Beadle

During this season, Foothills experienced several leadership and staffing transitions as long-serving team members concluded their ministry and new leaders stepped into key roles. These changes brought both challenge and opportunity, as the church sought to remain faithful to its mission in the midst of uncertainty and change.

The Covid years were among the most difficult in Foothills' history, yet they also became a time of refining and renewal. Through it all, the congregation was reminded that the church's foundation is not found in programs, buildings or familiar routines, but in Christ Himself—unchanging, faithful and present in every circumstance. What emerged from this season was a clearer sense of identity and purpose, rooted in trust that God continues to lead His people through every season.

When pandemic restrictions finally began to lift in 2021, Foothills entered another season of transition. After two decades of faithful service, Pastor Ian concluded his ministry at Foothills to accept a call from the Alliance President to serve as District Superintendent in Ontario. The appointment was a recognition of his shepherding heart and his ability to guide churches through renewal and growth.

His departure was deeply felt across the Foothills family. For many, Pastor Ian had been a steady presence through life's milestones—a pastor who baptized their children, walked with them through loss and pointed them faithfully to Jesus. His leaving marked the close of a deeply formative chapter in the life of the church.

Pastor Ian's leadership left a lasting legacy: a congregation strengthened in its mission, deepened in community and renewed in its heart for God and others. As Foothills looked to the future, it did so as a vibrant, intergenerational, gospel-centered community—rooted in faith and ready for the new season God was preparing.

At the same time, the congregation was still recovering from the disorientation of the pandemic, making this a particularly fragile moment in the life of the church. To guide Foothills through this season, the Elders Board adopted a co-leadership model. Pastor Carla Olsen Draper, with her strong pastoral care and deep knowledge of the church family, served alongside Pastor Tim Beadle, who brought years of leadership experience in coaching churches through times of transition. Together, they gave oversight to Foothills from August 16, 2021, through August 14, 2022, faithfully guiding the congregation through this time.

Difficult but necessary decisions were made, including significant budget reductions and staff restructuring. These changes were painful, yet they ensured the church's ability to continue its mission. Even in this challenging period, ministries carried on. Worship was faithfully led, pastoral care was extended and outreach efforts continued to keep Foothills engaged with the community.

Though this was a difficult period, many long-time members saw God's faithfulness at work. Carla and Tim emphasized prayer, care and honest communication. They guided the congregation through grief for what had been lost, while pointing toward hope for what God could yet do. In many ways, this was a season of refining, stripping away assumptions and calling the church back to its core identity in Christ.

This period of transition also brought new leadership and fresh energy to key areas of ministry. New team members stepped into vital roles, strengthening organizational health, worship, communication and community life during a season marked by both challenge and change. Behind the scenes, the support staff provided steady guidance and care, ensuring that the church continued to function with excellence and unity even in uncertain times.

Though Foothills faced significant challenges, it emerged from this season with renewed dependence on God and deep gratitude for His sustaining grace. The resilience of its leaders, staff, and congregation testified to a faith that endured through testing.

By the summer of 2022, a growing sense of anticipation filled the church as preparations were made for the arrival of a new Lead Pastor. It was a moment filled with hope and expectancy—signaling not just the close of one chapter, but the beginning of another in Foothills' unfolding story of God's faithfulness.

On August 15, 2022, Kyle Harnett began his ministry as Lead Pastor of Foothills Alliance Church. For Kyle and his wife Lauren, this was in many ways a homecoming. Years earlier, they had been married at Foothills. Kyle had also worked closely with Foothills leadership during his time at Capstone Alliance Church, when the church partnered in the birth of Horizon Church. His connection to the Foothills family was already deep and meaningful, and his arrival carried a sense of continuity as well as new beginnings.



Pastor Kyle Harnett



At the time of his call, Kyle was in his mid-thirties—a young leader, yet one with significant theological training and pastoral experience. His zeal for the gospel was contagious and his vision for church renewal resonated strongly with a congregation eager to step into the next season after years of transition.

From his earliest Sundays, Kyle's preaching drew people in. Rooted in Scripture, communicated with clarity and infused with passion, his sermons consistently concluded with an invitation to return—and to "bring a friend." Under his leadership, young families began coming back to Foothills and new people were hearing and receiving the gospel. There was a palpable sense of renewed energy, as if the church was catching its breath after a long and difficult climb.

Kyle's ministry style emphasized both depth and accessibility. He called the church to serious discipleship, while making the gospel message clear and compelling to newcomers. His youthful energy, combined with pastoral warmth, made him approachable to people across generations.

One of the early priorities of this season was to strengthen and expand the pastoral team in order to support Foothills' growing ministry. New roles were created to deepen discipleship, expand outreach and foster leadership development. Areas such as compassion and community engagement, spiritual formation and youth ministry were given renewed focus, ensuring that the church continued to nurture people of all ages in faith and service.

This period also saw thoughtful transitions as long-time leaders passed the baton to others and new pastors joined the team to build on the strong foundation already in place. Together, the staff and congregation embraced a shared vision—to equip disciples, care for the community and multiply the ministry impact of Foothills both locally and globally.

Under Kyle's leadership, Foothills has entered a fresh season of mission. The call to know God, love others, reach neighbours and serve the world has been renewed with vigor. Kyle emphasizes multiplication—raising disciples who make disciples, leaders who develop other leaders and churches that plant new churches. This forward-looking focus echoes the pioneering spirit of earlier eras while addressing the opportunities and challenges of today.

Young families have found a home at Foothills, while long-time members have expressed gratitude for the renewed sense of clarity and momentum. Worship has been marked by vitality, children's and youth ministries are regaining strength and outreach continues to serve both the Edgemont community and Calgary at large.

As Foothills approaches its 60th anniversary in October 2025, the Harnett years represent a time of hopeful anticipation. The church has weathered decades of growth, turbulence, revival and renewal. Now, with a young and visionary pastor, it finds itself poised to step boldly into the future.

Kyle often reminds the congregation that the call of Jesus is both timeless and urgent: to be a people transformed by the gospel and sent into the world with good news. With renewed energy, a strengthened staff team and a clear sense of mission, Foothills Alliance is once again leaning forward—trusting that God will continue to do “immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine” (Ephesians 3:20).



It has been said that you cannot see the big picture while standing inside the frame. By stepping back through sixty years of Foothills Alliance history, we have caught a glimpse of that larger frame—the faithfulness of God across generations.

From the pioneering families in the 1960s who planted a church in Calgary's northwest, to the seasons of revival under Pastor Gordon Fowler, to the unsettled years of the early 1980s and the renewal under Pastor Steve Elliott's vision of being a "lighthouse church," the story of Foothills has always been one of God leading His people forward. The establishment of the preschool in 1993, the strengthening years under Pastor Ian Trigg's shepherding and the steady growth into a multicultural, intergenerational family all testify to God's provision. Even the Covid years bear witness to His sustaining hand.

Now, under the leadership of Pastor Kyle Harnett, Foothills is experiencing fresh momentum and renewed vision as we enter our seventh decade. We give thanks for those who carried heavy burdens in the past—the "living stones" who laboured, prayed, sacrificed and dreamed. We also look ahead with confidence, believing that the same God who led us through times of uncertainty will continue to guide us into a future filled with opportunity.

As we celebrate 60 years of God's faithfulness in October 2025, may the story of Foothills Alliance Church be more than a history book. May it serve as a living testimony—a reminder that the Lord has been with us, is with us now and will carry His work to completion.

The legacy of Foothills is not only in buildings, programs or milestones, but in lives changed by the gospel. As we move forward, may we remain steadfast in our mission: to know God, love others, reach neighbours and serve the world.

And so, with gratitude for the past and anticipation for the future, we join our voices with those who have gone before us in declaring:

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God our Father. All we have needed, Thy hand has provided.

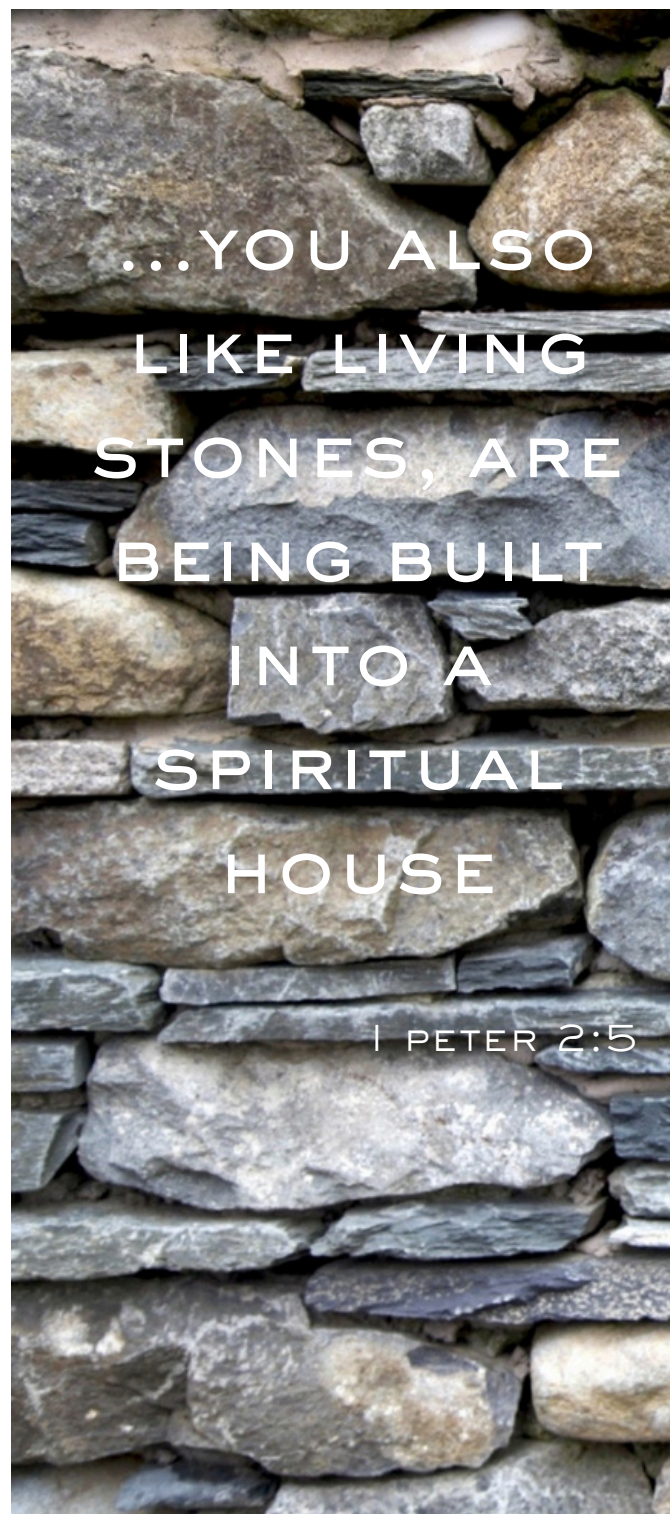
THESE STONES...

Welcome and thank you for being part of this time of reflection. Each of us carries a piece of the Foothills story—whether you’ve been here for decades or just a short while, your experiences are part of what it means to be the Church. Scripture reminds us that we are “living stones, being built into a spiritual house” (1 Peter 2:5). Together, we are part of God’s household, a family of faith in which every person and every story matters.

We begin with a historical overview, not simply as a record of dates, events or milestones, but as a reminder of God’s faithfulness across the years. History gives us perspective: it allows us to see where we’ve come from, how we’ve grown, what we’ve overcome and how God has led us as His people. But history is more than what happened in the past—it’s about meaning. It helps us recognize the deeper story of God shaping us into His community of faith.

In Joshua 4, when the children of Israel came across the stones at Gilgal and asked, “What do these stones mean?” they were invited to remember God’s acts of provision, reflect on their personal and communal significance and carry those lessons into the future. In the same way, our historical overview is like those stones—it prompts us to ask, “What does this mean for us as the Foothills Faith Community?”

The following is an opportunity for each of us to participate—as living stones in God’s house—by remembering God’s work among us, reflecting on what it has meant in our lives and sharing in shaping how we see ourselves as the Foothills Faith Community moving forward.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

This is your opportunity to participate. Your perspective matters—each memory, insight and story adds to the whole. Just as no stone could be missing from the memorial at Gilgal, no voice here is without significance.

As you work through the following questions, take time to:

- Remember God's work among us.
- Reflect on what it has meant in your own life.
- Share so that together we see the fuller picture of the Foothills Faith Community.

Beginnings

When did you first attend Foothills and what kept you returning?

Why was this significant for you and your family in your faith journey?

Community

Who were the people that made you feel like family at Foothills?

What did their friendship and kindness mean to you?

How does this experience shape the story of Foothills as a community of faith?

Inspiration and Challenge

As you reflect on the history of Foothills, what moments inspire you?

What challenges have shaped your own journey of faith?

Highs and Lows

What do you see as the "high points" and "low points" in our story?

How did God work through both to accomplish His purposes in our church family?

Recurring Themes

What themes do you see repeated throughout our history?

Where do you notice these themes and what stories illustrate them?

Lessons for the Future

What lessons or values from our past should be weighed carefully by today's leaders as they prayerfully shape a renewed vision for Foothills?

How do these align with biblical principles?

