

Hello Vineyard!

Isn't it cool when Sunday teachings line up perfectly with where you're at in life? That is certainly the case for me with our current series, "The Way In is the Way On." A little over a month ago, I was at the end of my rope: overwhelmed by my list of seemingly impossible tasks and thoroughly exhausted. I'm so grateful that Jesus met me there with rest and to **lead me through it by leading me in**. He didn't tell me what to "fix" in my exhausting circumstances. Instead, He lovingly revealed a deeply held idol in my life (called "the plan") that was enslaving and exhausting me. He walked me through turning away from it and letting it go, which was a beautiful experience!

Now I'm approaching my role in the church with more freedom than I've ever experienced. But I still sometimes look at our church transitioning in so many areas and think with frustration, "Why is this taking so long, Jesus? What is the plan here?" As I ask him this, if I allow him to gently turn my attention to Himself, I see that He is not anxious, frustrated, or in a rush (like I am). He reminds me that He is working in SO MANY WAYS under the surface in all of our lives, moving us closer to Him and laying a stronger and better foundation for our church. He lovingly reassures me that this is HIS church, not ours. And He says to me yet again, "Emily, you don't NEED a plan, because I have the plan. You only need to stay close to me." After hearing this more times than I can count, I find myself trusting Him more and more with the timeline. And as I do, He's teaching me how to be led by Him: unrushed and non-anxious like Him. It seems He is doing that with many people in our church family right now, which is also so beautiful!

In this Quarterly:

- Ministry Area Check-Ins
- **VCC & Rongai Vineyard in Kenya**
- The "Numbers" Section
- Vineyard USA Happenings
- Upcoming this Quarter

Ministry Area Check-Ins

VCC Kids

While we wait on God to show us the way through the leadership transition in VCC Kids, it has been so great to continue to get to know these awesome little humans – they are hilarious, sweet, and full of energy, life and curiosity. **One of the main things on our hearts for the kids in our church is that more of YOU would be connected to more of them.** We continue to feel God leading us toward more integration for the kids into the whole body. Please continue to pray about what your role in that might look like!

Youth

With five incoming middle schoolers, our group has grown in numbers and energy for this school year! We've had a great time together so far on Tuesday evenings: fun food (cereal buffet, anyone?), worship, and discussions (like "Ask Me Anything"). **We look forward to God deepening our relationships with Him and each other this year.** If you don't know our amazing youth, stop by the tech booth on Sundays where at least one of them is serving every week!

Compassion & Justice

We've had a couple of Sundays in recent months when our friends from the Waymakers have joined us for baptisms and some of you are now consistently volunteering at the food pantry during the week. We also had over 20 of us serving and deepening relationships there at this past Saturday's Service Day & Mini Retreat. Our growing connection has been a huge blessing. **As the holidays approach**, we're heading into a season of generosity as a church. Would you prayerfully consider how God might be leading you to engage in these opportunities?

- **Oasis's Food Box Drive**, providing food and essentials to refugee families in STL.
- **Stocking Stuffer Gift Drive for the Waymakers** community, delivered before Christmas.
- **Student Sponsorship at La Vina School** in Nicaragua for their 2024 school year.

Worship

Worship continues to be a joy as we serve on Sunday mornings, both upstairs AND downstairs. A mini band leads worship with the kids once a month, and it is such a blessing! Worship Circle, which has been excellent, ended for the year with October's event, but stay tuned for **times to gather and worship together over the holidays**. Check out our Spotify playlists on VCCLife.org, Vineyard Worship's excellent [new album](#), and also let us know what you're worshipping to!

Men's Ministry

Our men have been getting together monthly since April and it's been an excellent time of connection and encouragement! The Men's Retreat is coming right up on the first weekend of November (Friday the 3rd and all day/evening Saturday) at beautiful Camp Mihaska where we'll emphasize SPACE and have more opportunities to worship, connect with each other, and talk about how to grow our love for God and others. Thanks for Chris Macky, Bobby Harris, David Stark, and the rest of the guys involved for making all of this go!

Leadership Structure Assessment Team (LSAT)

Have you ever experienced a time when God did something so deep and so unexpected in you that you had trouble explaining it to others? This is what we are experiencing on the LSAT. We were formed by Pastoral Council in 2021 to assess our church's leadership structure and recommend changes. As we sought God together about our leadership structure, he answered us in a way that none of us expected: by taking us on a transformational journey as individuals and as a group in learning how to pursue His will together. This has certainly taken a lot longer than any of us expected, but God is showing us more clearly how this will impact everything and we're actively seeking Him on how to invite the whole church into this journey. It's all much easier to explain in person so please ask one of us (Anna Schulte, Caleb Chou, Dannielle Strassner, Tom Holt, and me) if you'd like to hear more!

Staff & Leadership Changes

We've had several staff and leadership changes in 2023:

- **Erinn Stevens** transitioned out of her staff role as the Youth Admin to be able to focus more of her time and energy on her wonderful family. She will however continue to LOVE THE YOUTH and hopefully drop in on Youth Group every now and then.
- **Todd Swindell** stepped down as the Sunday Morning Manager. We are grateful for his faithfulness in this role and will miss he and Rhonda as they now attend another church.
- **Bob Tarr** will no longer be serving our church as a Leadership Community Pastor in order to focus more attention on Susan's health.
- After a long process of prayerful consideration, **Jill & Tyler Campo** felt led to explore a different church home for their family. We're incredibly grateful for their time here and for the many ways they have served. We will miss their family, but are so thankful for the relationships we continue to have with them.

VCC & Rongai Vineyard in Kenya



Our journey with the Rongai Vineyard, near Nairobi Kenya, began about three years ago through VCC member, Emmanuel Mwambaza, who was helping his close friend and mentor, Aimable, with a bible study he was leading for other refugees in Kenya. With David Stark's guidance and the involvement of the Association of Vineyard Churches of Kenya, Aimable planted the Rongai Vineyard in 2021. Since then, the congregation has grown to around 130 members. **Through Emmanuel and his trip to minister to this new church in late 2022, our church has forged a partnership with them.** For a refugee in Kenya, providing basic necessities such as food, education, and healthcare is exceptionally difficult. Just in the past six months, we have been able to assist Aimable and the Rongai Vineyard in various ways:

- We provided funds for Pastor Aimable and his leaders for conferences and biblical training.
- We funded the Rongai elders to purchase and distribute food to 16 families in the church facing severe food shortages.
- We coordinated with an educational organization in Kenya to identify children in the church in need of tuition support, allowing us to sponsor 38 children/youth for the upcoming year.
- We're currently supporting Pastor Aimable with a serious skin condition requiring surgery.

To learn more or become more involved in this partnership, reach out to David Stark.

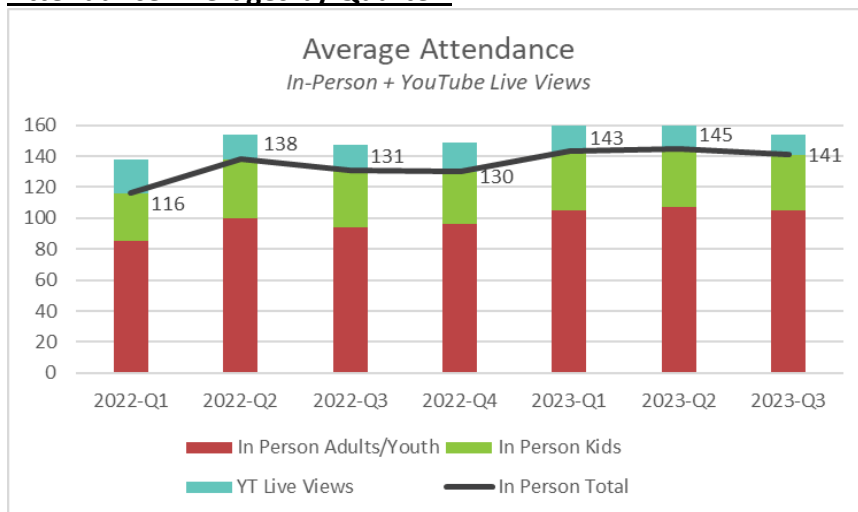
The "Numbers" Section

YTD Financials:

Our 2023 financial goals are to fund our operating expenses, pay for small-scale building projects, and put another \$75K towards the building loan principal. **We are currently ~\$13K behind** the pace on reaching this goal as of Sunday, October 22nd. *The VCC Board plans to send a more thorough financial update in late November.*

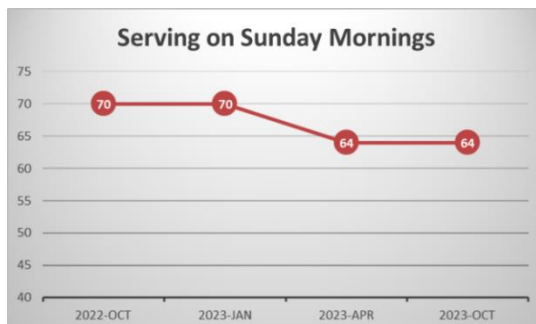
Thanks again to everyone who gives so generously and faithfully to our church. For those considering an offering, you can do that at vcclife.org/give

Attendance Averages by Quarter:



Serving:

We'd love to have even more of you join in the ownership of Sunday mornings. Check out all [current openings here](#).



Serving Needs:

- Children's Ministry**
 - 1 - Preschool Teacher
 - 4 - Preschool Assistants
 - 3 - Elementary Teachers
 - 4 - Elementary Assistants
 - 1 - Principal of the Day
- Other Sunday Teams**
 - 3 - Point Person
 - 1 - Sound team member
 - 2 - Livestream member
 - 1 - Visuals (overhead)
 - 1 - Coffee

Join our Sunday crew

[VCCLife.org/serving](https://vcclife.org/serving)

Vineyard USA Happenings

In early August, we had 16 adults and 11 youth/kids head off to the [2023 Vineyard National Conference](#) in North Carolina. We had an excellent time together in God's presence and are excited about how Jesus is leading the new national team. Check out the content on the link! Then just last week, we had 12 adults spend a couple of nights in Urbana, IL at our **Regional Gathering** where all were encouraged to prioritize wholeness with Jesus while enjoying further connection with other churches in our region.

Upcoming Vineyard USA Events:

- [Better Together Conference](#) in April. Hosted by our four Associations (Women's Association, Hispanic Association, Black Pastors and Leaders Association, and the Asian American Pacific Islander Association), this is an intentional place of encouragement and affirmation for women and people of color in the Vineyard. It is for anyone interested in thoughtfully discussing race, gender, reconciliation, and the multiethnic church, while moving intentionally toward being the Beloved Community. Talk to Caleb Chou if you're interested!
- The **Vineyard National Conference** is now annual. Two sets of dates have been [announced](#) for summer of 2024 (June in Denver and July in Cincinnati). Save the date if you're interested in attending and stay tuned for more details!

Upcoming this Quarter

This quarter, as we continue letting God IN during our series, "The Way In is The Way On," our focus turns to generosity for the holiday months. And hopefully we can have some fun and good times by gathering together, too! *See all of our [current announcements and events here](#).*

October: Gathering Table Breakfast – Saturday, October 28

November:

- Men's Retreat – Friday, Nov. 3 – Saturday, Nov. 4
- **Oasis Food Box Drive** – collecting food through November 12, deliver to a refugee family after that!
- **Community Check-In? / Thanksgiving Potluck?** – *a Sunday in November, stay tuned...*

December:

- **Waymakers Stuff-a-Stocking** – stuffing stockings through December 10
- Your Fun Holiday Event Here? Have an idea? Contact Emily: emily@stlvineyard.org
- **La Vina Student Sponsorship** – sponsor a La Vina student to attend school in 2024.
- **Christmas Eve is a Sunday** this year – stay tuned for our plans for service(s?) that day

If you have any questions, or an additional area you'd love to know more about, let me know!

Serving with you,
Emily McCall, Pastor of Equipping & Operations