



**The English Speaking Church of Verbier Association**  
*'Sharing the love, grace and truth of Jesus Christ'*

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2025**

This report covers the 2024 summer season and the 2024-2025 winter season.

Summary

Two encouraging seasons that have seen continued growth in the ESC worshipping community and also significant leadership changes as the previous Chairman handed over to the new ESC Chairman and to the Director of CORA.

Summer 2024

During the summer, the chaplaincy was extended from 3 to 6 weeks covering the period 14<sup>th</sup> July to 18<sup>th</sup> August inclusive. The service time was 5pm as previously to allow people enough time to go to the main Festival concerts. The theme for the summer services was 'Reflecting on psalms from the Bible and listening to uplifting choral versions by the British composer Sir John Rutter'. The feedback was very encouraging and the involvement on the three Sundays during the Music Festival of musicians Festival Academy was a huge bonus.

Winter 2024/5 Season

On 28<sup>th</sup> November Andrew Baines (outgoing ESC Chairman) and Mark Houghton (incoming Director CORA) opened the season and started their handover. Ten chaplains with varying backgrounds then followed with the preaching theme of 'People who encountered Jesus'. In this period a total of 22 Sunday services were held as well as services on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Good Friday, plus a wedding. The average attendance of the usual Sunday services was 45, a healthy increase on the previous year. Sadly the British Army has moved their ski training away from Verbier so numbers at the carol service were significantly down. However, the Christmas and Easter services saw the chapel filled to capacity.

Midweek Activities

Regular weekly ESC activities during the winter season were also very well attended. The main events were the bible study on Monday evening, kindly hosted by Dawn & Kelly Barbey, which regularly attracted up to 15 people (significantly above last year), and an apres-ski social meeting at the chaplain's apartment on Tuesdays, many of which were standing room only. The Friday morning informal pre-ski 'bible breakfast chat' didn't gain much traction and the Committee decided to lay it down in the New Year.

Service Leadership

During the year the Committee members took an active role in our Sunday services and ensured that they all ran smoothly. This allowed the chaplains to focus on the actual service and encouraged great involvement from committee members.

The Leadership Team.

Andrew Baines stepped down in December after many years of loyal service building ESC. His responsibilities were divided between myself as the new Chairman and Dr Mark Houghton the new CORA Director. Splitting a job like this was always going to be a challenge and there were many teething problems that needed resolving. As the season



progressed, and particularly when I came out for face-to-face meetings during my 2-week chaplaincy, much progress was made. Work still remains to be done as management and responsibilities settle down into a new pattern. The Committee is to be thanked for its perseverance and forbearance.

### Finance

The costs associated with running ESC Verbier are funded by donations from individuals and collections during services, for which we are extremely grateful. We are thankful also to the Commune de Val de Bagnes for its contribution of CHF 1,000 (annual grant of CHF 500 plus a one-off catch up). The accounts for the year to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025 show a small deficit after our annual operating costs, but this should not stop us pursuing our mission for activities and causes that we would like to help as part of our Christian witness within Val de Bagnes.

### Next Year

During the coming year we will continue to support our English-speaking community in all the ways we have done traditionally. This will be through our chapel services, our weekly activities and our pastoral care, but also with a renewed focus and priority on reaching out to everyone of all ages with the love, grace and truth of Jesus Christ. With some more settling in required with the new leadership structure, we will seek to keep things running effectively, before seeking the Lord's will on how we might improve our outreach and mission.

**Revd Will Pearson-Gee**

Chairman

29<sup>th</sup> May 2025