

BRIERCREST ANNUAL REPORT 2021

*“The Word of our God
shall stand forever.”*

ISAIAH 40:8

Briercrest is a community of learning that calls students to seek the kingdom of God, to be shaped profoundly by the scriptures, and to be formed spiritually and intellectually for lives of service.



BRIERCREST.CA

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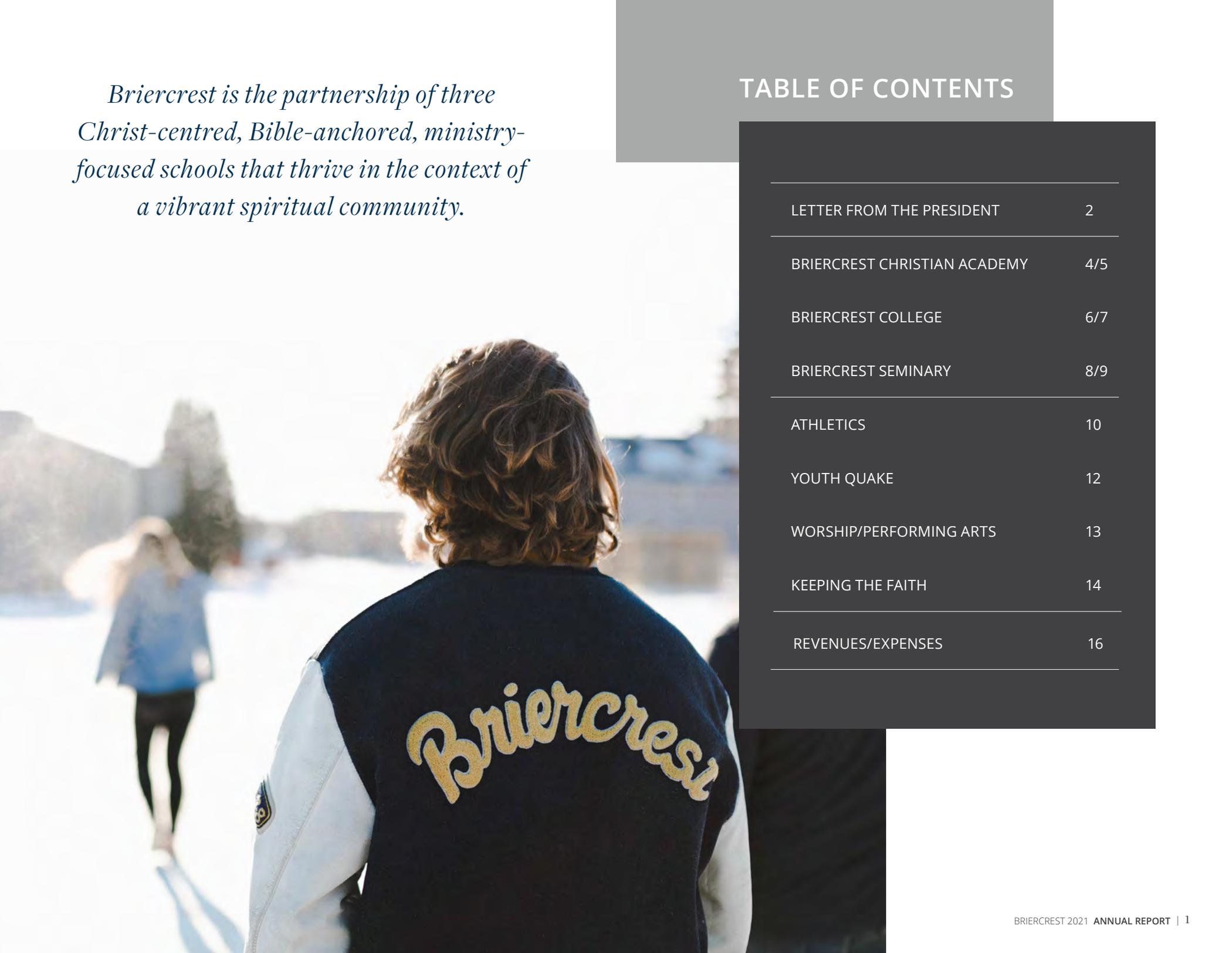
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As we pause to reflect and take inventory of this past year, my thoughts are drawn to a wonderful promise that God made to the people of Israel when they were faced with jarring news.

"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior." (Isaiah 43:1-3)

While we have not traversed floods or fires this year, we have all had to navigate a global pandemic. This has been a difficult time for all of us and many have suffered deeply. However, it has been in the midst of this challenging time that we have witnessed God do some extraordinary and remarkable things. We are overwhelmingly grateful to God that we have been able to carry on our mission with in-person education for the academy and the college. And while the seminary has delivered its education online, we believe that God has allowed us to effectively steward our vision of *educating disciples, equipping the Church, and engaging our world.*

We thank God for the parents who trusted us with their children. We thank God for the students who joined us in our mission. We thank God for churches and ministries that have cheered us on. And we thank God for all of you, our partners in providing an education that disciples. Thank you for your prayers and your generous financial support. Indeed, God has allowed us to work together in contributing to His mission.

Thank you for your partnership,

Michael B. Pawelke, President



BRIERCREST CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

Heart. Soul. Strength. Mind.

PERSEVERING TOGETHER: This year, Briercrest Christian Academy focused on the theme of perseverance with the hope of building endurance in our students and staff. Adversity is inevitable in life and the challenge to persevere presents itself everyday. We are confident that as we have learned to persevere through challenging circumstances this year, we are not only better prepared to face tomorrow's challenges, but we have a greater capacity to help others persevere and grow in their endurance.

A neat development that has taken place this year is a student-led group that has persevered in meeting consistently throughout the year to pray for one another and the school. Even when learning was moved online for small periods of time, they met virtually. Furthermore, this group did not stay put, but they reached out to their peers and another prayer group was formed out of it. There are now two separate prayer groups meeting consistently to pray for the students, staff, and institution and we are excited to see students making their faith their own and putting it into practice.



"The athletics programs are awesome and I have been blessed to play and perform with a team of athletes who seek to bring glory to God through their attitudes and work ethic. BCA is also a school that greatly emphasizes the spiritual growth of its students. There are always opportunities to ask questions about God and receive guidance from small group leaders, teachers, and our chaplain. I constantly feel like I am being encouraged and connected with other believers, and that there is a real love for God that creates a tightly knit faith-based community."

—Andrew Cara (GR 12)

BCA is a place where dreams come true, where leaders are born, many laughs expressed, where God is shown, and where lifelong friendships are created. For me BCA is a place where your fellow students are not just classmates but those who you grow with, through small groups, classes, chapels, and events, spiritually, academically and socially, you grow as a community. At BCA my life has changed as I have encountered God through the love of my teachers, and the fellowship of my friends. Really BCA is where I found myself, and God.

—Jonah Bachmann (GR 11)



137
STUDENTS



40
2021 GRADS

BRIERCREST COLLEGE

Education that Disciples

This year's theme at Briercrest could be the famous phrase: "Amazing Grace!" We are overwhelmed with gratitude that, by God's grace, we were able to remain in-person all year. Even with two positive cases (one in September, one in January) arriving to campus, we had zero COVID-19 transmissions in the college.

DISCIPLESHIP COMMUNITY: Due to protocols and restrictions, small groups became a vital aspect of our community. As a result, deeper relationships were formed within hall cohorts. We saw wonderful fruit from this, including a handful of students declaring faith in Jesus and over a dozen baptisms in lakes and backyard hot tubs.

As one Student Development staff stated, *"We're seeing students openly confess their struggles and build supports. Where once sin and addictions, and the ensuing shame, were kept in darkness and created barriers in relationships, God has brought them into the light and into compassionate, loving small hall communities. We're seeing God work through all our students to build up the body of Christ in a way I haven't experienced in my time on staff."*

Our chapel program was continually adjusting throughout the year, moving back and forth from larger gatherings in the Hildebrand Chapel to smaller variety chapels led by staff, faculty, and students. By God's grace we were able to continue vital supports like a weekly worship gathering and our Days of Prayer, where students shared stories of breakthrough, freedom from bondage, and revitalized faith.

The student body was also proactive in serving our community. Our Outreach team mobilized the student body to rake

leaves, shovel driveways, lead Alpha, and respond to needs in Caronport. Student Government worked creatively to provide care, entertainment, and support for the student body.

LEARNING COMMUNITY: Students were grateful to be studying together on campus instead of being isolated online. One first-year student remarked, "I was blessed every day with the community. If I would've had to do online school, I would be struggling every day. But even just hearing girls talking on the hall as they walked past my door was a reason to get out of bed."

Educationally, we adjusted to a 7-week semester format. This new model provided increased flexibility, giving students fewer classes to manage per session and allowing students who started the year online to join us on campus as soon as they were able.

Our faculty and staff made this all possible. Faculty redesigned their courses, adding more video content and accommodating students via Zoom. All staff adapted to an advanced cleaning regimen without hesitation. Witnessing their commitment and service was truly humbling.

We were overjoyed to hold an in-person worship service for our 45 college graduates from the class of 2021 and a virtual graduation celebrating the classes of 2020 and 2021. Worshipping with our on-campus graduates was a special experience as we thanked God for His care over our community this year. Experiencing His grace and help at every turn strengthened our faith and continues to fill us with praise.



440
STUDENTS



45
2021 GRADS

BRIERCREST SEMINARY

Foundational and flexible education for the Church

SIGNS OF GROWTH: Briercrest Seminary has been making significant progress despite the restrictions caused by the global pandemic. Enrollment numbers continue to grow amidst the shift to online classes. Signs of growth have been evident as we have prepared for reaccreditation and initiated transitions in our larger degree programs.

Four new faculty have been hired in our counselling and leadership programs. We welcomed Dr. Jay Mowchenko to the helm of our leadership program, relieving Dr. Paul Magnus after over half a century of service. While Dr. Sam Berg lightens his course load for a much-deserved rest, we have welcomed Margaret Clarke and Carlie Pagens to the counselling faculty as these degree programs continue to flourish. We continue to be served well by a competent and dedicated group of adjunct faculty who teach from our campus or from their own locations across the continent.

THE PAUL E. MAGNUS CENTRE FOR LEADERSHIP STUDIES: The Leadership Centre has been developing its offering of leadership resources under the guidance of its Director, Tristan Norton. Along with seven five-course certifications, four new micro courses have been developed and several new initiatives are in progress. The Teaching Studio has been a hub of activity in the past year, serving as a production studio for micro courses, recorded lectures from professors in the College and Seminary, and our week-long seminary modular classes.

STUDENT STORY

Amy Vetter (Uglen), a student in the Master of Arts Leadership and Management (MALM) program, has been serving in a variety of children's, family, and women's ministry roles since she graduated from Briercrest College in 2011. Together with her husband, Caleb, and their three boys, she serves in churches in Alberta and South Dakota.

"I have had the unique privilege to be one of few moms in ministry, with a husband who took a step back from the workplace in order to be at home with our kids. This has given me incredible freedom to lean into ministry and have the freedom to innovate and launch a variety of community-oriented programs designed to bridge the gap between the church and the community by

meeting practical needs."

After finding herself out of a ministry role in the middle of COVID, she decided to return to Briercrest to complete the MALM program.

"Ten years into ministry, every class within the MALM program has been gold! Although many of the insights would have been helpful ten years ago, I have a greater understanding of the complexities of ministry with a variety of experiences under my belt, and I am able to draw invaluable insights from both professors and classmates. I wish that all of my colleagues could experience the breadth of learning, first-hand leadership wisdom, and engaging class dialogue that spurs me on to become a great and godly leader."



BRIERCREST ATHLETICS

Becoming third in a world striving to be first

While it has been a challenging year for post-secondary athletics across the country, we have been able to see God's incredible goodness in a number of ways!

We greatly missed the opportunity to have our teams competing in conference play this year. Our staff and student-athletes have had to grapple with the challenge of not having a season for the first time in their lives. At the same time, we have had the privilege of having our student-athletes on campus, while many teams have not. We greatly enjoyed being able to train and practice regularly for much of the fall semester, and when increased restrictions came in for the winter semester, we found our staff and student-athletes leaning into the opportunity to grow and innovate amidst new challenges.

This included pouring time and energy into serving others. Staff and athletes worked to give high school athletes opportunities to play on our campus through mini-leagues and skills development camps, both of which filled up in days. Some young athletes drove over two hours to our campus each week for a chance to play. Summer athletics camps, which are always a highlight, will be able to proceed this summer with no restrictions. Sports camps have always been a key ministry for Briercrest Athletics, so we're happy to be able to share what we have with our neighbours.

COVID-19 has presented us all with opportunities to learn and grow. This year, we've seen special growth in team

culture and in our athletes' confidence to serve others and proclaim Christ through sport. We have a unique training ground in competitive athletics and we have seen our athletes being transformed toward their God-intended purposes as disciples of Jesus through the challenges of this season. God has used these challenges for His eternal purpose.

OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES: This year, our women's volleyball team was able to continue their tradition of praying with opponents online.

Through a connection with the head coach of Olds College (*a Christian and Briercrest volleyball alumna*), God opened three opportunities for online "team times" of fellowship, testimony, and prayer between the Briercrest and Olds women's volleyball teams. Each team time ended in small groups, where members of both teams talked through discussion questions that Briercrest's team chaplain had prepared in advance.

"Our girls were able to speak God's truth in love, and to be real and vulnerable as the Holy Spirit led them!" said head coach Nolan Weinmaster. "It was a great learning and growing opportunity for us in our journey as Christ-followers. By the last one, one of the Olds players took the opportunity to share her life story and some of the challenges she had faced. It was so neat to see how that trust had developed between our teams."

In an email, the head coach of Olds shared: "God is so good and tonight was such a blessing to my soul and to our athletes' souls. Please share my gratitude with your gals for having the courage to share their stories and to invite us in. They truly did create a safe space for my athletes to feel comfortable and to experience the love and peace of God. Seeds were planted or watered in the hearts of 12 young women, some of whom have never heard that there is a God who loves them and values them."

YOUTH QUAKE 2021

Replacing worldly pressures with the yoke of Christ

OVERVIEW: Our main goal for YQ@Home was to bless youth workers who were working overtime and feeling burnt out during this difficult season. We wanted to provide them with a break from planning for the entire month of February, so we created a month of keynote talks, seminar sessions, worship sets, and group challenges that could be used at any time.

One leader shared, "YQ was such an encouragement to us and to our youth group. Our students really engaged with the content, we were able to have amazing chats online afterwards, and it gave us a much-needed break. Thank you for making it so fun, so full of worship, and for trying something new in the midst of all this craziness."

We are so thankful for the financial support. Because of donor contributions, we were able to offer YQ@Home completely free!

We were encouraged to see hundreds of more groups registered to participate in this free online package. Based on a survey of registrants, we estimate that thousands more youth were reached through YQ@Home this year! We are looking forward to new possibilities for YQ@home after this year of reimagining and are hoping for some elements of YQ@Home to continue in the future.

WEEKEND AT A GLANCE:

• 4600 REGISTRATIONS • 349 GROUPS • \$23,078 DONATIONS

THEME: The theme for YQ21 was Under Pressure. In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus promises rest for our souls—and not a temporary rest from the worldly pressures that we will eventually pick up again, but a true rest found in replacing them with His yoke. We looked at what it means to take up Jesus' yoke, carry His burden of discipleship, and live into who we were created to be.

PERFORMING/WORSHIP ARTS

Glorifying God through arts and music

This year, the Performing and Worship Arts department has gone above and beyond to be creative, resourceful, and to help our students mature and thrive in their talents and confidence. We were able to increase our online presence and connect with alumni through two video performances for A Briercrest Christmas 2020, and we involved our students in recording in the Tech Centre Studio more than ever before! We feel blessed by the hard work and dedication of our teachers and students this year.

MEET OUR GRADUATES

Katy Turgeon graduates this year after being involved with Briercrest worship teams throughout her four years. She believes that her voice lessons gave her the basic skills to succeed and develop confidence in her voice. Katy also says that as technology becomes an integral piece of church and worship, the experience she received this year to work and lead in those settings is incredibly valuable.

Sterling Boehm graduates with his BA in Music: Vocal Performance this year. He says that the music program has given him confidence on the stage, and recording in the Tech Centre this year has pushed him even farther. Next year he begins his Masters of Vocal Performance at the University of Regina, and he feels more than prepared to face this new opportunity both academically and musically.

"Briercrest has given me so many performance opportunities that I feel comfortable going into a different setting and performing in a different space. It's given me a lot of discipline and the ability to work hard."

KEEPING THE FAITH CAMPAIGN UPDATE

It is heartbreaking when young people turn away from the Church and abandon their faith.

Unfortunately, it's all too common in our increasingly secularized culture. Studies tell us that one out of every three students will totally abandon their faith after graduating from high school.

Thankfully, research also says that students who choose a school like Briercrest after high school are far more likely to keep their faith and remain connected with the Church than those who enter public colleges and universities.

Even if they choose Briercrest for only one year, God uses that year to change their lives forever by helping them build a strong foundation in their personal faith.

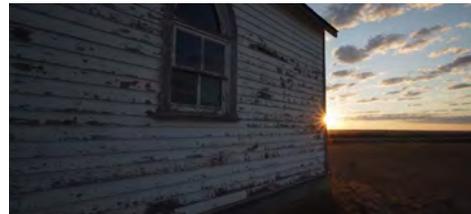
We are so grateful that God continues to use you to help us foster a solid faith foundation in the lives of young adults.

Hundreds of students each year choose Briercrest to help them build that foundation, and they are doing these things to strengthen their faith at a time when their peers are letting go of it. Those who hear Jesus's words and follow them are compared to wise builders who build their house on the rock (Matthew 7:24).

Thank you so much for faithfully supporting and praying for young men and women to Keep the Faith. We are so



HOW CAN WE HELP YOUNG PEOPLE
KEEP THE FAITH?



humbled and grateful to report that God has provided \$7.1 million dollars towards our \$8.9 million-dollar goal for the Keeping the Faith campaign.

Thank you for investing in this generation of passionate young Christians who will continue to equip the Church and engage the world.

Visit [BRIERCREST.CA/GIVE](https://www.briercrest.ca/give) to make a contribution to our continued work on campus.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

In the midst of a year filled with lots of uncertainty, God continued to show his faithfulness to Briercrest. We ended the year with a \$2.8 million surplus in our Operating Fund and we were able to repay all of our debt. Praise the Lord that He is with us in every season!

