



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

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30TH APRIL 2026

This report covers the 2025 summer season and the 2025-2026 winter season.

Summary

Both the summer and winter seasons ran smoothly with significant attendance at festival services and slightly lower attendance on Sundays in February and March. The running of the ESC has been far smoother as procedures and protocols have become established. The finances are sound with the year ending with a slight surplus.

Summer 2025

There were five services from 20 July to 17 August starting, as last year, at 5pm to allow people enough time to go to the main Festival concerts. The theme for the summer services was 'Heroes of the Old Testament' and this was well received. The feedback was very encouraging and the involvement on two of the three Sundays during the Music Festival of musicians from the Festival Academy was a huge bonus. I was able to come out for the final week of the Festival which was the first time for me in Verbier in the summer.

Winter 2025/6 Season

On 28th November Mark Houghton (Director CORA) opened the season. Ten chaplains with varying backgrounds then followed with the theme of Characters from the Nativity, the Early Church, Easter and so on. The series worked well. There was a lot of feedback about the Christmas carol service and this will be factored in for next season. Bear Grylls came and spoke about his new book and this drew a full church and was a fantastic event with some rarely seen locals making an appearance.

The tragic fire at Crans Montana took place in the early hours of New Year's Day and we quickly laid on an opportunity for locals to lay flowers in church. Various reflections were posted via Instagram/Facebook and WhatsApp and received very positive feedback from far and wide. We felt that 'The Little Church' made a positive difference in a hurting community. Christmas and Easter services saw the chapel filled to capacity.

Midweek Activities

Regular weekly ESC activities during the winter season were also 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, and an apres-ski social meeting at the chaplain's apartment on Tuesdays, many of which were standing room only. Once again 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, although the slot was used by some chaplains to meet specific people to pray. Of note was the arrival of a young couple - India and Declan - who came at the invitation of Darryl and Carmen McConnell with the remit to start outreach to the young seasonal community. They ran a small but helpful Alpha Course and engaged fully outside of Sunday worship. As a first step it was a great success and lessons have been learnt but funding, training and oversight is needed if we are to attempt a repeat next season.



Service Leadership

During the year the Committee members continued to take active roles in our Sunday services and ensured that they all ran smoothly, which importantly allowed the chaplains to focus on the actual service.

The Leadership Team.

During the year Findlay Black stepped away from committee meetings but continues as our Treasurer. The Committee remains too small and lacks depth and resilience should someone become unavailable. One of our priorities is to build up the Committee to increase our capacity for management and mission.

Finance

The costs associated with running ESC Verbier are funded by donations from individuals and collections during services, for which we are extremely grateful. The year ended with a surplus of almost CHF 3,000 compared to a small deficit last year. Should we wish to continue with outreach to the younger demographic next year, we shall need to fund it adequately and this will stretch our finances.

Next Year

During the coming seasons 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. I am immensely grateful to the Committee for all their hard work.

Revd Will Pearson-Gee

Chairman

1st May 2026