Throughout its history, Virginia Baptists have always been Kingdom pioneers. Because of our adventurous spirit and willingness to explore where God leads us, we are often not surprised when the BGAV grows from outside the Commonwealth.

In July 2014, Church Planter Robin Ellingwood and his wife, April, packed up their four children and belongings and moved from a small city in eastern Canada to Toronto, the fifth largest metropolis in North America and the second most multicultural city in the world. Robin’s vision was to plant a network of missional communities in the neighborhoods of a city that is home to over 2.7 million people. Demographic studies have shown that less than three percent of the Toronto population attends an evangelical church. Robin had his work cut out for him.

Fast forward to present day, the family has gotten to know the neighbors, and they have gathered with people and joined in the good work that God has shown them in their new hometown. The group today includes 20 adults and 7 children. Together, they have been practicing the rhythms of ups and downs, ins and outs. The group gathers to sing songs of worship, interact with the scriptures, and pray together. They eat together, have fun, and share stories with one another. In addition to fellowship and worship, they reach out to the ones outside the group. They practice hospitality...
with their neighbors, serve in the neighborhood, and share their faith with the people God has placed in their paths.

Their hospitality and new connections led to two noteworthy events last year. During the church’s Christmas party, a young woman from the community donned a wetsuit and was baptized into the cold waters of Lake Ontario. Two weeks later, the young man who designed the PRAXIS logo surrendered his life to Jesus. These two baptisms are the first fruits of the labor put forth by the people of PRAXIS.

Thanks to the generous support of the BGAV, the V3 Church Planting Movement has been able to train, coach, and invest in Robin as he plants a church in a community where Christ is not known. Because of the investment of time and effort, the Toronto faith community is gaining a fresh imagination for what it means to be the church in the place where the people reside.

PRAXIS is a family of missionary disciples making disciples in the neighborhoods of Toronto, Canada. Robin Ellingwood serves there as lead planter.

PRAYER POINT: Father, we give thanks to you for the pioneers who continue to pave the way in Your name, both near and far. We are grateful for your guidance in helping us to tell others of the peace and joy that come when we walk closer with You. Amen.

Ministries like this one are made possible by the Alma Hunt Offering for Virginia Missions and Cooperative Missions gifts of Virginia Baptist churches affiliated with the Baptist General Association of Virginia.