

OUTLINE:

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NOTES:

PART ONE - OUR STORY

- The Gathering was planted by Chris and Adrienne Stevens in January 2006.
- This church was to be a “different” type of Church:
 - An outward focused, community-oriented church
 - A casual, ‘come-as-you-are’ type of church that ‘made sense’ to people who were far from God
 - A relational church that prioritized people over programs
 - A planting church – a church with a vision to eventually plant more churches around the city
 - A church filled with people who were committed to living on mission each and every day
- After deciding to come alongside the Mennonite Brethren Conference of Ontario, The Gathering was birthed and Sunday services started being held at St. Jerome Catholic School in Riverside South.
- The Church grew quickly, with many from the community joining, and several Home Churches were formed.
- From its earliest days, The Gathering has always had a strong commitment to reaching its neighborhood with the love of Christ. Outreach events like Soccer Camp and Movie in the Park (and many other events) have been a very important part of the ministry of the church.

- In 2011, after having outgrown the space at St. Jerome Catholic School, The Gathering moved its Sunday Services to St. Francis Xavier Catholic High School.
- In 2013, The Gathering moved its offices from an old house on River Road to 111 Colonnade Rd.
- Early in 2014, Chris' time as the pastor at The Gathering came to an end as he transitioned into another pastoral role at another church.
- At that time, Jeff & Kim Jantzi were living in St. Catharines where Jeff was serving in pastoral ministry at Southridge Community Church.
- Through Jeff's involvement in the MB Conference, The Gathering was introduced to Jeff and Jeff was invited to apply to become the new Lead Pastor at The Gathering.
- After much discernment and prayer, Jeff was hired and moved his family to Ottawa during the summer of 2014. In August 2014, Jeff officially became The Gathering's Pastor.
- Under Jeff's leadership, The Gathering has continued to grow and change as we strive to reach more and more people who are far from God.
- The Gathering believes that we are all "better together" and has always had a strong commitment to partnering with other churches and ministries:
 - The MB Conference
 - Parkway Road Church in Greely
 - Bytown Community Church, our church plant in the Glebe
 - One Way Ministries
 - Jericho Road
 - First Place Options
 - OIM
 - Compassion Canada
 - C2C
- While the pandemic has significantly shifted the makeup of our church over the past few years, the church remains committed to "connecting people to the love of Jesus". Starting here in Riverside South (as the only church in the neighbourhood) and beyond! We're so excited for what God has in store for us and are glad to have you a part of it.

PART TWO – WHO WE ARE TODAY

In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus made it clear why the church exists: The church exists to "go and make disciples..." That is our mandate. That is why we exist. That is Jesus' call to His church. Therefore, at The Gathering, everything we do as a church must be about discipleship and making more and better disciples (i.e. followers or apprentices of Jesus). This document seeks to explain how we desire to do that.

OUR MISSION: *Why We Exist*

We Exist to Connect People to the Love of Jesus! (2 Corinthians 5:20-21)

We believe that God's love is irresistible and that as we become more and more convinced of God's love for us that we will surrender more and more of our lives to Him. Knowing, experiencing, and sharing the love of Jesus is what discipleship is all about.

OUR VISION FOR DISCIPLESHIP: *Who We Want to Become*

We exist to connect people to the love of Jesus...so that they would follow Jesus!
(Matthew 28:18-20)

We follow Jesus by:

- Being With Jesus (John 15:4)
- Becoming Like Jesus (Romans 12:1-2)
- Doing What Jesus Said (John 14:15)

MARKS OF DISCIPLESHIP:

What Commitment to the Vision Looks Like

Three marks of a disciple who is committed to "Being With Jesus":

- Hunger and passion for Jesus (Matthew 22:37)
- Learning to hear God's voice through prayer & Scripture (John 10:27)
- Knows and increasingly lives out of their identity in Christ (Eph 1-2)

Three marks of a disciple who is committed to "Becoming Like Jesus":

- Increasing desire and commitment to being led by and filled with the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:16-18)
- Actively invites the Holy Spirit to transform their character and to heal their heart (Galatians 5:22-23)
- Leans in to authentic community and spiritual friendship (James 5:16)

Three marks of a disciple who is committed to "Doing What Jesus Said":

- Increasingly 'agrees with Jesus' and commits to obeying His teaching (John 14:23)

- Actively pursues opportunities to share the Gospel and to make more disciples (1 Peter 3:15)
- Actively cares for ‘the least of these’; the poor, needy, and oppressed (Matthew 25:31-46)

VALUES: *What’s Important to Us*

1. We Value The Bible

We want everything we teach and do to be shaped by the Bible. We believe that all Scripture points to Jesus (John 5:39) and that it’s impossible to truly know Jesus without knowing the Bible. It is the inspired word of God and it helps us to become more and more like Christ (2 Tim 3:16).

We want to be a people of the book!

2. We Value 24/7 Worship

We want the songs that we sing on Sundays to passionately and honestly reflect our love for Christ. At the same time, we know that worship is so much more than the songs that we sing one day a week. In fact, worship is a lifestyle and can be experienced in everything that we think, say, and do every single day of the week (Rom 12:1-2).

We want to be a people who worship Christ in everything!

3. We Value Prayer

We believe that there are things that God wants to do in our world that He cannot do unless His people pray. Prayer changes things (Matt 7:7)! Church strategy, leadership and plans are all important but ultimately it is prayer that makes room for the Holy Spirit to work.

We want to be a praying church!

4. We Value People

Because we believe that people are God’s most prized possession and that He loves everybody (no matter what), we are committed to being as welcoming and as loving a church community as we could possibly be. Everybody needs a church family. So whatever your story - there’s a place for you around our table.

We want to be a loving church!

5. We Value Mission

We don't attend church, we are the church! And as the church, we are called to live as sent people in our everyday lives; sharing the love of Christ with our friends, neighbours, coworkers, and the poor and marginalized. The mission of God is to drive everything that we do in life (Matt 28:18-20, Gal 5:6). The church does not exist for itself, but for our hurting world.

We want to be a people who live on mission!

6. We Value Engagement

While some may treat church as a product to be consumed, we strive to be a church that encourages everyone to contribute. We believe that the Church is not being the Church unless everyone is playing their part (1 Cor 12:12-26). It takes everyone's time, talents and treasures to accomplish everything that God has called us to accomplish.

We want to be a church of contributors!

7. We Value Authenticity

In a world where people often hide behind their masks and pretend to be something they are not, we want to be a people who are taking our masks off and becoming more and more honest with God and with one another. We believe that 'authenticity' is a great indicator of spiritual growth and maturity (James 5:16), and so we long to be real and honest in everything that we do and say (both from the stage on Sundays as well as in our everyday lives!).

We want to be an honest church!

8. We Value Simplicity

We want to be a simple church; A church that focuses on relationships instead of programs. At the same time, we want everything we do to be done with excellence. This requires a laser focus and a commitment to doing only a few things, but doing them well. As a people, this also requires that we avoid the pull to over-schedule our lives, allowing God the space He needs to grow our relationships.

We want to be a focused church!

Our Structure: The Gathering is staff-led and Elder-protected. This means that our Lead Pastor, Jeff Jantzi, and the staff (Kristyn) make all day-to-day operational decisions while the Elder Board provides oversight and accountability to the staff (primarily the Lead Pastor). Jeff, as the Lead Pastor, reports directly to the board of elders while the staff report to him.

- Each year at our AGM, Church Members vote to affirm the annual operating budget and new Elders to the board (if there are any new elders to be affirmed). In the event that the church was hiring a new Lead Pastor, Church members would also vote to affirm the board's recommendation of a New Lead Pastor.
- The Gathering's Bylaws are available to read online at www.thegatheringottawa.com/bylaws

Our Denomination: We are affiliated with the *Ontario and Canadian Conferences of Mennonite Brethren Churches*, an evangelical-Anabaptist movement of Christian Churches across Canada. Visit www.mennonitebrethren.ca for more information.

Our Theology: While our theological convictions may be quite similar to most evangelical denomination, some points of emphasis may feel a bit different.

The MB Confession of Faith, "Sidewalk Edition"

We believe in God as eternal Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God created and sustains the universe. The eternal purpose of God the Father is to create a people who will bring glory to God forever. God alone is worthy of worship.

We believe that God became human in Jesus Christ. Jesus came to restore the world because humans have rejected God in disobedience. Jesus taught and modeled the way of God's kingdom. He died on the cross, making it possible for us to accept a renewed relationship with God. He rose from the dead, broke the power of sin and death, and frees us to live in obedience to God's will.

We believe that God the Holy Spirit invites all people to be reconciled with God and to join the global family of faith. Believers confess their faith, are baptized, and join in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Through the power of the Holy

Spirit and guided by the Bible, members of the church seek to live as followers of Christ and invite others to experience this new life.

As Christians, we are called to turn:

- from ignorance of God to a personal relationship with God
- from bondage of sin and past mistakes to freedom, forgiveness, and healing
- from individualism to interdependence with others in the local church
- from lifestyle choices that harm us, others, and the earth to choices that nurture wholeness, healing, joy, and peace
- from hating enemies and ignoring neighbours to showing love and justice to all
- from loving possessions to sharing with all in need
- from aimless existence to a mission of representing and proclaiming God's kingdom on earth

As Christians, we look forward to the day when God will once again send Jesus to bring all things under God's eternal rule.

NOTE: To view the "Detailed Edition" of the MB Confession of Faith, visit www.thegatheringottawa.com/confession

GETTING CONNECTED AT THE GATHERING:

- Home Church – The best way to get connected, to grow, and to be cared for at The Gathering is to join a Home Church!
 - Visit www.thegatheringottawa.com/homechurch to see what Home Church might best suit you.
- Volunteering & Serving – Get plugged in to a volunteer and serving role to get connected and to pitch in!
 - Some Volunteer opportunities include: The Set Up & Tear Down Team, The Java Team, The Greeting and First Impressions Team, The Audio/Visual Team, The Prayer Team, Kids Ministry & Youth Ministry, The Worship Team, Home Church Leadership, Serving at Special Events etc....

- Membership – Become a member to formally align yourself with the vision and mission of The Gathering (see “Part Three”).

PART THREE – LOCAL CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

A Biblical View of Church Membership:

- *Universal Church Membership*

A person becomes a Member of the Church the moment they become a follower of Jesus Christ:

“And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”
Acts 2:47 (ESV)

“For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.”
1 Corinthians 12:12 (ESV)

“For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”
Romans 12:4-5 (ESV)

“Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.”
1 Corinthians 12:27 (ESV)

In part, baptism is an expression of membership to the Church of Jesus Christ:

“...We have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit.”
1 Corinthians 12:13 (NLT)

“Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all.”
Acts 2:41 (NLT)

- *Local Church Membership*

Local church membership is not discussed in the Bible. However, it does not mean that church membership is 'unbiblical'. Instead, to become a member at The Gathering is simply to commit to expressing the Biblical reality that you are already a member of Christ's Universal Church! Church membership is a local expression of a universal reality. It's the way to say that "I am committed to furthering God's Kingdom in the world through this local church!"

What it means to be a Member at The Gathering:

Members at The Gathering commit/agree to the following...

1. That I have committed my life to Jesus Christ and trusted Him for salvation. (Ephesians 2:8-9, John 3:16)
2. That I am willing to accept the spiritual oversight of the Lead Pastor, Associate Pastors, and the Elders and to follow their lead, unless it is plainly contrary to the written Word of God. (Acts 20:28, Hebrews 13:17, 1 Peter 5:2-4)
3. That I accept the MB Confession of Faith, striving to live out its principles as best as I am able. (James 1:22-25)
4. To be baptized as an adult upon my confession of faith, if I have not been already. (Acts 2:38, Matthew 28:19, Romans 6:1-4)
5. To embrace the mission, vision and values of The Gathering. (1 Corinthians 1:10)
6. To affirm the provisions contained in the Constitution, as best I can understand them: www.thegatheringottawa.com/bylaws
7. To commit my time (volunteering & service), talents (gifts, skills and abilities) and treasures (financial tithes) to this church family and live my

life according to the Scriptures as best as I am able. (1 Corinthians 12:12-31, 1 Peter 4:10-11)

How to become a member:

1. Attend a Membership Class
2. Get baptized, if you aren't already
3. Complete the Membership Application Form and submit to Jeff Jantzi
4. Wait to hear back from the Elder board

Questions? Comments? Want to chat?

Contact Pastor Jeff Jantzi: jeff@thegatheringottawa.com



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The Gathering Ottawa

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