

OUTLINE:

- 1. Part One - Our Story**
 - a. How did The Gathering start? What is our context?
- 2. Part Two - Who We Are Today**
 - a. Our Mission, Vision, Strategy, Values and Structure
 - b. Our Denomination
 - c. Our Theology
 - d. Getting Connected at The Gathering
- 3. Part Three - Church Membership at The Gathering**
 - a. A Biblical View of Church Membership
 - b. What it means to be a member at The Gathering
 - c. How to become a member

NOTES:

PART ONE - OUR STORY

- The Gathering was planted by **Chris and Adrienne Stevens** in January 2006.
- Chris grew up in the east end of Ottawa and, prior to planting The Gathering, was a youth pastor at a Pentecostal Church in Hamilton, ON.
- One time, while they were visiting Ottawa, Chris & Adrienne felt a strong call from the Lord to plant a church in the Riverside South area.
- 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 further discernment and 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. FX Catholic High School**.
- In 2013, The Gathering moved its offices from an old house on River Road to 111 Colonnade Rd, where we are now.
- Early in 2014, after 8 years as the Lead Pastor of The Gathering, Founding Pastor Chris Stevens followed the Lord's call and became the Lead Pastor of **Waterloo Mennonite Brethren** in Waterloo, Ontario.
- 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 invited him 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 new Lead 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.
- As the only church (of any denomination/expression) that meets in Riverside South, The Gathering remains committed to reaching our neighborhood with the love of Christ.
- Above all, The Gathering remains firmly in Christ's grip. **It's HIS CHURCH!** He is faithful. He promised that he would build his church, and we are amazed as he continues to do so THROUGH US! And we hope you will be 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 disciples. And we believe that this starts in our own neighbourhood (Riverside South), and beyond.

Below is an explanation of our identity, breaking down who we feel God is calling us to be and the unique discipleship expression we sense Him calling us to make.

MISSION (Why We Exist)

The Gathering exists to connect people to the love of God! (2 Cor 5:20-21)

VISION (Four Vital Relationships)

To connect people to the love of God by growing four healthy, vital relationships; *Our Relationship with Christ, Our Relationship with our Families, Our Relationships with One Another, and our Relationship with our World.*

STRATEGY (Our Programs)

As a relational church that is committed to discipleship as a way of life (and not church programs), all the programs we do offer must be aligned and shaped by our Four Vital Relationships.

1. Relationship with Christ

Our Sunday morning gatherings exist to foster a growing relationship with Christ. While we don't want to be a church of "Sunday Christians", we do believe that Sundays play a significant role in growing us into "Everyday Christians." Through practical Bible teaching and honest worship through song, our desire is to equip people to take their next step towards Christ. Whether people already believe or aren't sure what they believe, we want our gatherings to make sense to everyone who comes on Sundays.

2. Relationship with Family

Our Kids & Youth Ministries exist to foster healthy spiritual relationships within our families by helping to disciple our children and by providing resources for parents. Because we believe that the best way to disciple our kids is in partnership between the church and the family, we work hard to equip parents, spouses, and children with the spiritual tools they need to grow together.

3. Relationships with One Another

Our Home Church Ministry exists to foster healthy, spiritual friendships with one another in the church. Because we believe that "circles are better than rows", we want every person that calls The Gathering 'home' to connect with a Home Church (a small group of people that meets weekly

in people's homes). The reality is that we can't experience spiritual growth on our own or just by listening to a sermon - we need to have people *in* our lives in order to become everything God wants us to become!

4. Relationship with Our World

Our Mission and Outreach Partnerships and Initiatives exist to foster relationships with our world, so that we can share the love of Christ with others. Whether it be in planning our own local outreach events or in partnering with organizations that are doing an excellent job, we are committed to bringing the love of God to our hurting world.

CORE VALUES *(What's Important to Us)*

These 8 Core Values are our top guiding principles. They inform everything we *do*, as well as and everything we *don't do* as a church community.

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 (1 Peter 2:9-10), 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 *(How we're governed)*

The Gathering is staff-led and Elder-protected. This means that our Lead Pastor, Jeff Jantzi, and the staff 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 Constitution** is available online at www.thegatheringottawa.com/constitution

Our Denomination *(Who we're affiliated with)*

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

Our Theology *(What we believe)*

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 – 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 it 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. To accept the MB Confession of Faith, striving to live out its principles as best as you are 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/constitution
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



www.thegatheringottawa.com

The Gathering Ottawa

Office Address: 111 Colonnade Road, Suite 2017
Ottawa ON K2E 7M3

Email: info@thegatheringottawa.com

Phone: 613-822-7440