

# **2022**

# **ANNUAL**

# **REPORT**



# Letter from our Senior Leaders

The fall of 2021 saw us regather across many of our locations after 18 months of pandemic lockdowns. We got creative with in-person gatherings, new expressions of community connection, and being the church in a way we hadn't ever been before. What followed in December and throughout the year were events that none of us were expecting.

Together we've spent the last year responding to revelations of sexual misconduct and abuse, grieving with those who have been hurt in our church, and processing the loss and breach of trust we've all experienced. It was a year of continued pandemic impacts, leadership and staff transitions, and significant fragility and vulnerability for our church.

In the midst of all of this, we remember Paul's encouragement to rejoice in all circumstances, recognizing Jesus' unfailing presence with us and the opportunity to know and become more like him in every situation—especially through our trials. We can become more compassionate and attuned to the pain and needs of the marginalized, more capable peacemakers in the midst of conflict, more patient and perseverant as we learn to follow God's timing, and more humble as our pride is challenged. Perhaps Jesus is revealing to us a new path forward, and inviting us to courageously follow the Spirit's leading in unity together.

## **In the meantime, our work as the church continues:**

- We're committed to learning from our own story and walking in the light;
- We're empowering our church for more local ministry in the communities where we live;
- We're taking practical steps to strengthen our policies, invest in healthy staff and leadership culture, and listen to and build trust with one another;
- We're committed to our Anabaptist DNA, intergenerational discipleship, the ministry of reconciliation, and inviting more people to the Jesus-centred life.

This year's report includes notes of change and evolution, and some amazing stories of people joining and encountering the love of Jesus in this community. Through it all, we've seen God's remarkable generosity and grace at every turn.

The work of healing and discerning our way forward as a church is before us. It's daunting but so very hopeful. This is an invitation to walk that journey together, with our eyes fixed on Jesus.

Peace,

**Karmyn, Matt, Jennifer, and Bruce**

# We've been busy

**Here are some key highlights of how we're adapting and evolving as a church:**

## **Regional Model**

We have begun shaping our ministry activity regionally, where it makes sense. This approach stewards our resources well, organizes ministry around communities where our people are most engaged, and increasingly empowers local ministry based on what God is up to in our communities.

## **Staffing**

Our incredible staff team has experienced significant transition in the last 2 years. While the team is about 30% smaller than pre-COVID, this transitional period allows us to do the necessary and forward-looking work to right-size and reconfigure our staff footprint to match our evolving ministry model and reduced budget. We're grateful for our amazing staff team and the work we get to do together!

## **Jesus Collective**

In partnership with Jesus Collective leadership, we have taken steps to accelerate Jesus Collective's move toward independence and self-sustainability. In 2022/23, we will fulfill our planned financial investment in Jesus Collective.

## **One Story**

We've formed a partnership with Wonderborn Studios to give our One Story kids and youth curriculum the chance to reach a wider audience of churches and families. This partnership also allows One Story to continue to be developed and expanded more sustainably, well beyond what we can accomplish on our own.

## **Online Community**

COVID has accelerated the opportunity to engage people meaningfully online in their spiritual journeys. We are investing in pastoral support, online home churches, our livestream, and other innovative ways to connect with and disciple the substantial online community that continues to engage with us.

# OUR MINISTRIES

## Adult Ministries

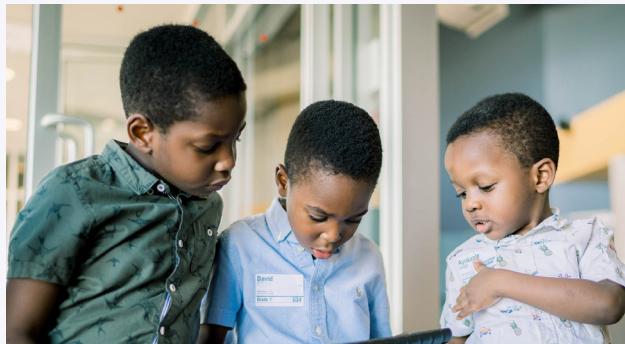
Funding Home Church, local events, pastoral care, volunteer training and appreciation, plus resourcing and compensation for our pastors.

## Shared Ministry Expenses

Resourcing and training for our staff team, administrative costs, and compensation for our senior leaders, IT, accounting, and HR staff.

## Facilities & Rent

Renting spaces for Sunday services and other gatherings, meetings, rehearsals, and funding storage facilities, utilities, and maintenance of the Oakville facility.



## Communications & Operations Support

Producing and distributing teaching, our livestream/online experience, as well as funding tech, support for our locations, and communications staff.

## Compassion & Missions Support

Supporting people in our own communities and around the world through local initiatives and our partnerships with World Vision, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), and BIC Canada Global.

## Kids and Youth

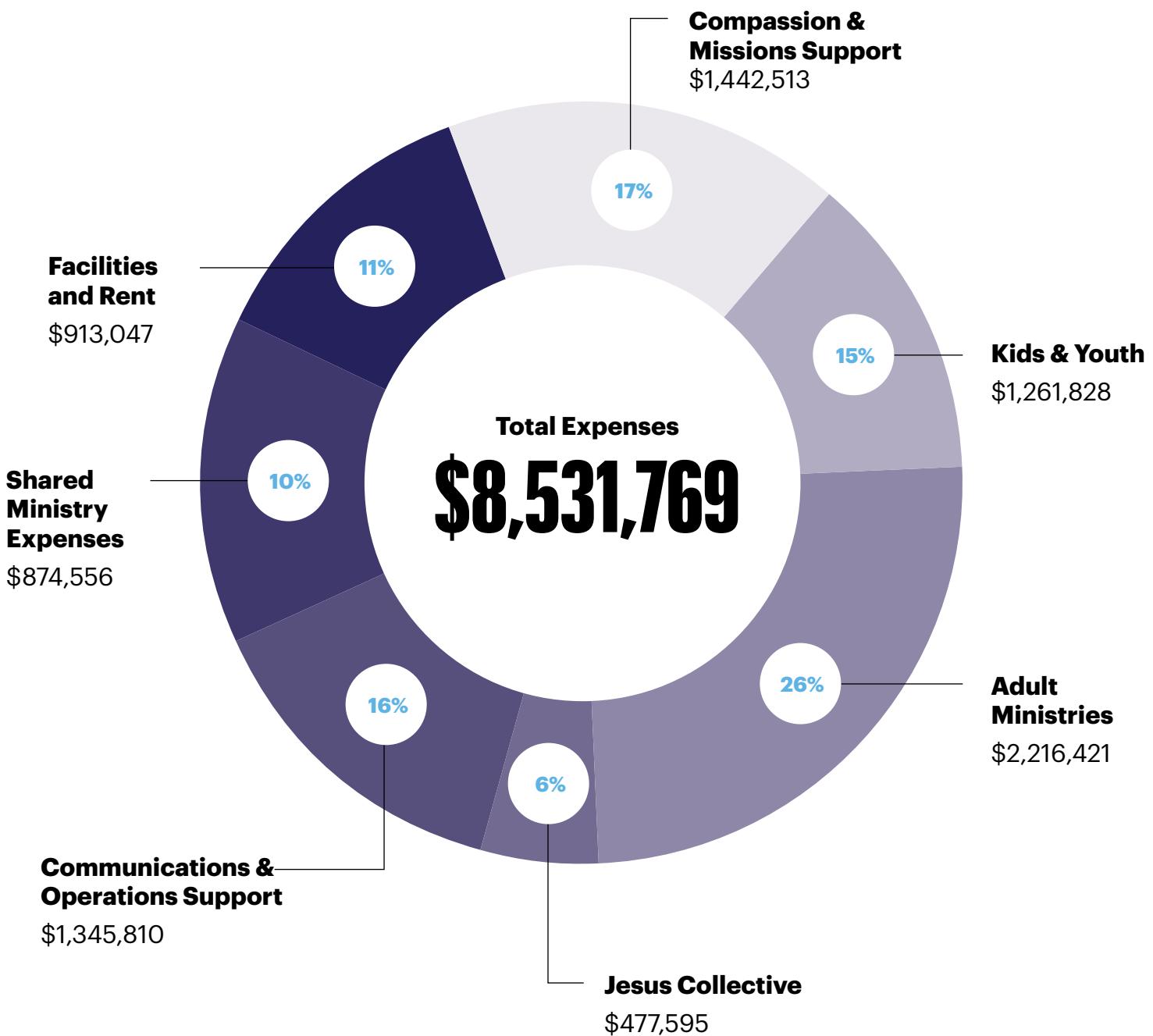
Discipling our kids and youth through relational connections/small groups, events, curriculum production, staffing, classroom supplies, and subsidies for our youth retreats or other experiences.

## Jesus Collective

Planning and executing events, Partner hubs, leadership formation experiences and training, building technology, producing and distributing ministry resources, and inviting other leaders and churches to join.

# MINISTRY EXPENSES

For more information on how to give,  
visit [themeetinghouse.com/give](http://themeetinghouse.com/give)



# ENGAGEMENT 2021-2022



## Snapshot of Core Ministry

We're an evolving community in a changing world, and we want to constantly be reviewing the ways we communicate who we are and how God is at work in our church. We are so grateful to have so many people meaningfully engaged at The Meeting House, even in light of COVID-19 variants and varying Sunday gathering schedules throughout our church.

# 2055

People in-person and online  
on a Sunday morning

# 314

Kids and Youth engaged  
weekly

# 501

Home Church attendees  
each week

# COMPASSION



**\$79,000**

**Invested in Compassion  
partners at the community level**

- Gazebo purchased for Bethany Residence, and affordable breakfasts served at Next Door Social Space in Burlington.
- Food baskets and gift cards given to residents of Indwell in Hamilton.
- Coat drive, and community garden ran to help those in Oakville.
- Lunches regularly packed for clients of Restoring Hope in Ottawa.
- Monthly dinners hosted for residents of the Hub in Parry Sound.

**\$170,000**

**Raised for MCC's  
Peacemakers campaign**

**\$100,000**

**Support to Raw Hope  
for Ukraine and other  
fragile contexts**

**\$30,000**

**Given to MCC's  
Indigenous Neighbours  
program**

**1400**

**World Vision children  
sponsored in Mposa  
and Chamba**

**\$15,000**

**Given to the Woodland  
Cultural Centre**

- 4 virtual residential school tours ran (Call to Action #59 from the TRC)
- 2 leaders sent on a Learning Tour to Timmins

**\$287,000**

**Given to 37 non-profit  
organizations from our  
Local Compassion Fund**

## **Some examples of what these supported:**

- A program providing safety for women working in the sex trade in Hamilton.
- Youth mentoring programs in Toronto, Mississauga, and Hamilton.
- Summer day camps for kids in low-income neighbourhoods.
- Food banks in Toronto, Oakville, Brampton, Brantford, and elsewhere, including infrastructure to help make them more effective.
- Refugee welcome centres in Ottawa, Toronto, and Waterloo equipping them to better welcome refugee claimants to Canada and support them through their claim process.



# STAFF 2022



## **Our Purpose**

We exist to grow loving communities of Jesus-followers who live and share his irreligious message.

## **Vision**

To introduce spiritually curious people to the Jesus-centred life, through a movement of Jesus-centred churches.

## **Values**

We are committed to non-violence, peacemaking, and being agents of reconciliation.

— Peace

Community —

We challenge ourselves to live simply so that we can give generously.

— Simplicity

Mission —

We believe that God created us for relationship with him and with each other.

We move beyond our spaces to share the gospel with people and care for them.

# FLEEING UKRAINE & FINDING COMMUNITY



## **Andrey and Masha find community at The Meeting House**

Andrey and Masha have come to Toronto from Ukraine, fleeing war and conflict to protect their three children. They both have felt so welcomed by the love and support they have received at church, being truly accepted into the community. They ask for prayer for Andrey's Mom, the kids adjusting to school, and work opportunities.

# HAMILTON BAPTISMS

## Celebrating Baptisms in our Hamilton Community

At The Meeting House, we have always said that church is not a building but a gathering of people who support and encourage each other as we follow and imitate Jesus. This year has had its challenges, but God has not been quiet, and He is still moving in and through the Hamilton Region.

At the beginning of this year, Kathy and Vanessa started to attend the Ancaster location. They were committed to Jesus but had a lot of questions and no church community to belong to. When they first came out to a Sunday morning service, they were unaware of the turmoil within our church, but they kept coming because the people they met made them feel welcome and comfortable, and the teaching pointed them to a deeper connection with Jesus. As a result of wanting to follow Jesus more closely, Kathy and Vanessa decided to get baptized.

As pandemic restrictions lifted and people returned to in-person gatherings, some of the activities we used to plan regularly as a church took on new meaning. Perhaps we took for granted things like baptism, communion, and social gatherings as a church, and not being able to participate in them for an extended period of time helped us appreciate them again. Early this fall, the Hamilton Region celebrated as a community as Kathy and Vanessa made a public declaration of their faith and, in obedience to Jesus' command, were baptized on a rainy Sunday morning in a horse trough in the parking lot! Amazing!

The past two and a half years have been challenging in many ways. Yet, God has continued to speak gently and graciously to our community through stories like Kathy and Vanessa and their courage and commitment in baptism.



# DIGITAL MINISTRY



## An Online Gathering Place

At the start of the pandemic, we had to get creative and adapt. So we launched an online church Livestream to create space for us to continue to meet for Sunday gatherings. While it was a bit of an adjustment, the Livestream grew, and with it, a new ministry emerged at The Meeting House.

While it started as a temporary solution to the restrictions brought on by the pandemic, this online space has developed into so much more. Since its start, multiple online home churches have launched and a thriving community has formed on Discord to become one of the largest gathering places for people who call The Meeting House home. This online community is made up of people of all ages and stages, from both near and far, old and young, and both long-time and new people to The Meeting House.

This year, to help support this growing ministry, Chris Chase stepped into the role of Digital Pastor. We've had online compassion fundraisers, live teaching Q&A, and everything in between! It has been great to see how God has been at work and we look forward to seeing how he will continue to work through this digital expression of church.