



GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2023

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

2021 - 2023

Prepared by President John Cressman  
and the EMCC National Team

APRIL 27 - 29, 2023  
STOUFFVILLE, ONTARIO

# THE EMCC National Team

The EMCC National Team is here to serve. With various giftings, skills and practical knowledge, the National Team looks forward to hearing how they can come alongside you, our EMCC pastors, global workers and churches. To see if someone on the team could assist you or your church, please read their bios at [emcc.ca/team](http://emcc.ca/team).



**John Cressman**  
PRESIDENT



**Brian Archer**  
LEAD REGIONAL  
MINISTER



**Nicole  
Jones-Qandah**  
DIRECTOR OF  
WORLD PARTNERS



**Marty Bennett**  
REGIONAL MINISTER  
(Part-Time)



**Lynn Dietz**  
REGIONAL MINISTER



**Jeff Knott**  
REGIONAL MINISTER



**Claran Martin**  
REGIONAL MINISTER  
(Part-Time)



**Deve Persad**  
REGIONAL MINISTER  
(Part-Time)



**Krista Bennett**  
NATIONAL COACH  
OF LEADER  
DEVELOPMENT



**Cal Knights**  
PROPERTIES MANAGER



**Wai-Lam Liu**  
COMMUNICATIONS  
MANAGER



**Heidi Middleton**  
HUMAN RESOURCES  
MANAGER



**Gail Thiessen**  
FINANCE MANAGER



**Ciara Brannan**  
MARKETING &  
COMMUNICATIONS  
COORDINATOR



**Shannon Hamill**  
DATABASE &  
CREDENTIALING  
ADMINISTRATOR



**Pam Hicks**  
WORLD PARTNERS  
ADMINISTRATOR &  
REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP  
COORDINATOR



**Lithin Josy**  
FINANCIAL  
ADMINISTRATOR



**Jean Winker**  
COMMUNICATIONS  
EDITOR



**Pauline  
Zondervan**  
BENEFITS  
ADMINISTRATOR

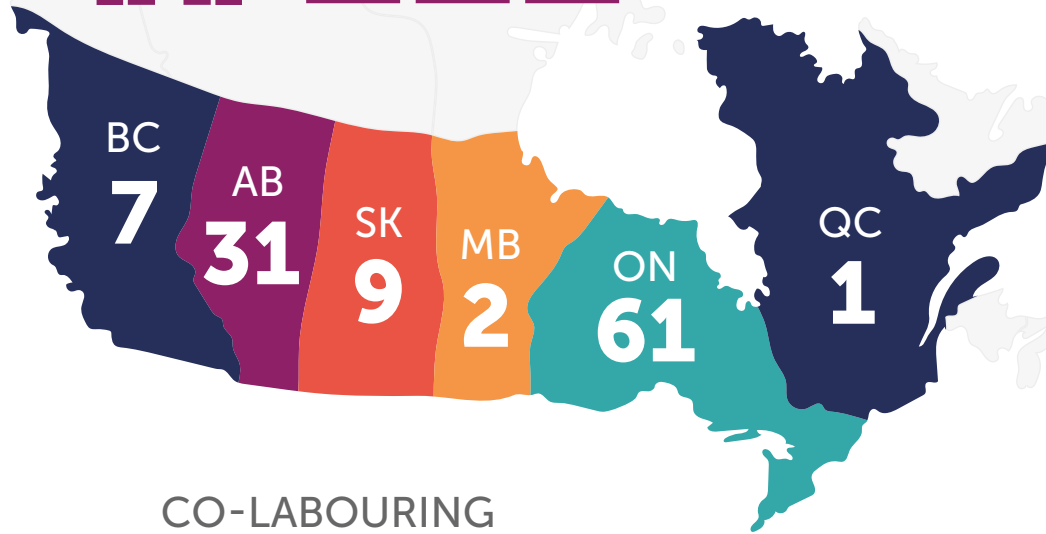
**Simon Beadle**  
REGIONAL MINISTER  
(Volunteer)

# Here & Now

## Member Churches



# 111



### CO-LABOURING

We celebrate all the ways our pastors and churches are choosing to work together. The Apostle Paul was fond of referring to his ministry colleagues as “co-workers for the Kingdom” (Romans 16:3, 16:9, 2 Corinthians 8:23, 1 Thessalonians 3:2 and Colossians 1:7). Over these past two years, we have seen an increase in churches collaborating together and, in some cases, merging together for stronger impact. Cases in point include Nova Church in Surrey, BC and Verity Church in Waterloo, ON. EastRidge Church in Stouffville, ON and St. Clair Church in Scarborough, ON, are coming alongside Riverside Church in downtown Toronto to help them sort through next steps.

In a few of our EMCC churches, we are seeing a rising interest in the co-pastor model. Rather than the typical senior/lead pastor and associate pastor model, some of our churches are

These snapshots are gleaned from our credential holders’ annual reports and anecdotal stories from our National Team over the past two years. Some signs are concerning, while others are very encouraging. As with any journey, we must pay attention to the signs.

FOR WE ARE  
**co-workers**  
IN GOD’S SERVICE

1 CORINTHIANS 3:9

experiencing the fruit and gifts of co-pastors. Case in point: Trinity Church, Waterloo ON, where Cerena Browne and Jake Bursey lead together. Further, in a few of our churches, we are seeing a tendency toward lay-leadership. In certain circumstances, driven by limitations or leading of the Spirit, these churches are moving ahead without formal pastoral leadership – co-labouring together in their context.

How might your church explore the impact of co-labouring together?

# Love the Lord your God

WITH ALL YOUR HEART, ALL YOUR SOUL,  
ALL YOUR MIND & ALL YOUR STRENGTH

MARK 12:30

## MENTAL & EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Across the country, our pastors are experiencing first-hand the emotional and mental impact of navigating the church through the pandemic and the weight of congregational change, division and departures. Some of our global workers have had to make considerable shifts and build bridges to those disillusioned by the actions of the church as a result of the pandemic. Through our annual reporting, credential holders are consistently describing their emotional tanks and reserves as low.

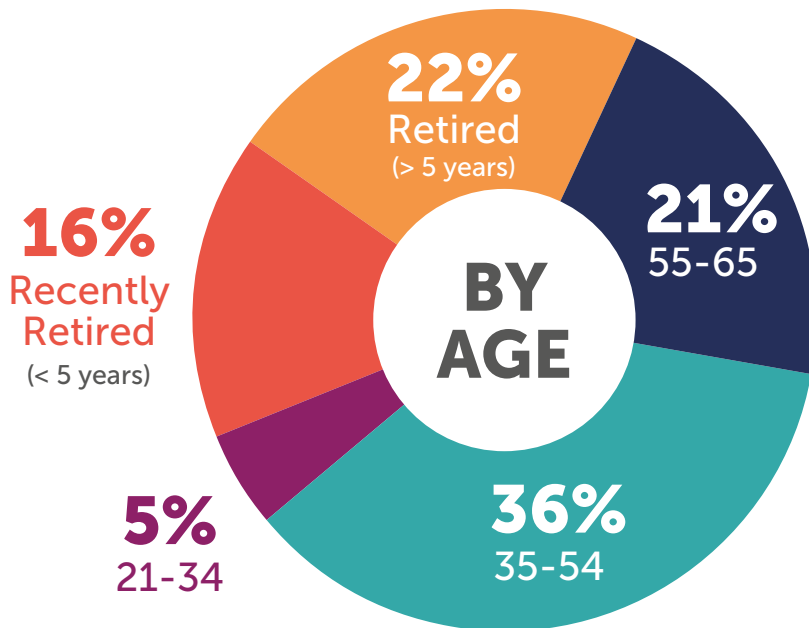
Our Benefits Administrator has had more queries than ever before from churches and pastors about mental health support, leaves of absence, burnout, sick days and depression. Coming out of the pandemic, we are hearing that pastors are generally depleted, tired and grieving the losses of people leaving their congregations. This has led to a rise in sabbatical requests.

Sadly, this has also led to some pastors choosing to leave their congregations for various reasons – emotional and mental well-being is often in the mix. Those credential holders who have surrounded themselves with a good support system, including counselling, and deliberate sabbath rhythms are finding renewed strength. But we are still in recovery and replenishing mode. Pray for your pastor.

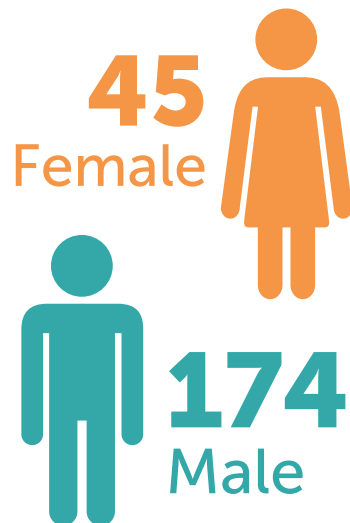
How are you as a leader paying attention to self-care?

How are you as a church community proactively working to support your leader’s well-being?

## Credentialed Holders



### BY GENDER (not including retirees)



## Credentialed Holders BY CATEGORY OF SERVICE\*



8

National Team



178

Serving in an  
EMCC church



47

Other Ministries  
(Parachurch, colleges,  
consultants, Chaplains)



24

Unassigned  
(no current  
assignment)



13

World Partner  
Supervised  
Global Workers

5

Recognized  
Global Workers

\* some may be in 2 categories due to bi-vocation

## CO-VOCATIONAL & PART-TIME MINISTRY

We are experiencing the rise and reality of co-vocational leadership. On the other side of the pandemic, we are seeing and supporting more multi-vocational and part-time pastors. There have always been some in our EMCC family who have been navigating both calling and career. These are our unsung heroes. But there is an increase in pastors who are working hard to juggle ministry expectations and a second or third job.

In the past, much of our pastoral resourcing has been centered around the full-time pastor. That reality has now changed. Case in point, our EMCC National Team is currently comprised of 6 full time and 12 part-time employees, two of which are bi-vocational. Approximately one-third of our churches are led by part-time/co-vocational pastors.

At our 2022 Regional Gathering, one of our speakers, Jeff Christopherson, challenged us that, in these times, we need to raise up an army of co-vocational leaders to serve the church of the future. Co-vocational leadership requires different expectations as well as creative and alternative ways of support.

What does it look like for us to do co-vocational ministry well?

PAUL LIVED AND WORKED WITH THEM,  
**they were tentmakers**  
JUST AS HE WAS.

ACTS 18:3

# Two are better off THAN ONE FOR THEY CAN HELP EACH OTHER succeed. ECCLESIASTES 4:9

## PEER TO PEER RELATIONSHIPS

We celebrate the desire and evidence that EMCC leaders are huddling together. These “huddles” have formed by intention and spontaneously—all for various purposes: mutual support and accountability, deliberate discipling, learning together, mentoring, prayer and discernment. God smiles as He sees us helping someone follow Jesus. We are encouraged by the renewed commitment to journey with companions.

We don’t have actual data yet about how many are connected in peer relationships. Still, stories abound of the benefits and joys of regular huddling with others, whether online or in person. What is driving this trend? Perhaps lessons learned through the pandemic. One thing we remind ourselves—this is not a solo journey; we need each other. We are disciples making disciples; leaders investing in other leaders.

Who are your traveling companions on your journey?



## Grants Given in 2021-2022

**Ministry & Leadership  
DEVELOPMENT**  
GIVEN TO CREDENTIALLED  
HOLDERS



**\$21,000**

**Building  
DEVELOPMENT**  
FOR MEMBER  
CHURCHES



**\$120,000**

THE  
Kingdom of Heaven

IS LIKE THE

yeast used in  
making bread.

EVEN THOUGH THERE IS ONLY  
A LITTLE YEAST

it permeates ever part  
of the dough.

MATTHEW 13:33

Churches and their  
contributions to  
the EMCC  
from 2021-2022



## SMALLER BUT SIGNIFICANT

Collecting statistics on church attendance has become a challenge, some might say irrelevant. As EMCC churches have returned to gathering, anecdotal consensus suggests our gatherings are smaller; our churches are smaller. By God's grace, there are a handful of congregations that are seeing increased growth, often for reasons beyond explanation.

Over these past few years, we have become a smaller denomination (for now). The attention of our Regional Ministers has been on helping our churches rebuild, retool and reassess next steps. But smaller does not mean inferior.

Jesus called us to be "yeast" infiltrating the larger dough. We have always embraced a God-sized mission as a Gideon-sized army. The EFC recently released [a report on the "significance" of the small church.](#)

In what ways are you focusing more on mission than on size?

### Churches who:

increased giving by \$2K or more

14%

increased giving slightly

23%

stayed the same with giving

25%

decreased giving slightly

11%

decreased giving by \$2K or more

9%

did not give

16%



## PROGRESS REPORT

# Our Journey Together

In 2021, the EMCC National Board gave the President and National Team the mandate to **stabilize** the denomination as we navigated through the unknowns of the pandemic. It was also a time of building trust as a result of presidential transition and National Team transitions. These have been important days of healing, reflection and team building. Trust is fragile. Trust is growing.

In 2022, the focus of our denomination turned toward **future readying**. We spent listening-time at our Pastors and Spouses Retreats seeking God for His future. As a National Team, we conducted an honest audit of all of

our systems and policies through a future-ready lens. Asking, "will what worked for us in the past take us to His future?" And so, we began strategizing, prioritizing, re-tooling and rebuilding. Over these past two years, considerable discernment and energy has gone into integrating World Partners into the systems and thinking of EMCC. We are making progress. As President, I wish to commend the National Team for their relational and strategic work. I would encourage our membership to express their thanks and encouragement to the team. Our team definitely sees their work as a "labour of love."





# There - Looking Ahead

## **Compass Points**

There are 4 directional priorities that we have been working on and will continue over the next two years leading up to our next General Assembly in 2025. Of course, every step we take is ordered through prayer and dependence on the Holy Spirit.



# FUTURE-READYING OUR organization

This includes: clarifying and updating our governing Articles, instituting a manual for Credential Holders, strengthening our understanding and agreements related to denominational membership, improving Presidential succession, researching potential new denominational funding strategies, continued retooling our systems and policies

to take into account new expressions of the church and integrating World Partners, developing needed systems for victim advocacy and abuse prevention and strengthening communication lines.

## CALLING TO CHRIST-LIKE character

The focus of this Assembly and our attention over these next days is on becoming like Jesus in our attitudes, behaviour and character. It has become clear that to influence today's culture: character matters. For some time now, the focus of leadership development in the church has been on competency and charisma. We believe there is a fresh call from God to godliness and character formation, along with growing in our gifts and abilities. In the Apostle Paul's letters to the early church about leadership, in passages like 1 Timothy 3, what should strike us about the list is that God prioritizes the leader's character. Only a single

characteristic pertains to giftedness (teaching). Depending on how the traits are counted, the ratio is as drastic as twelve to one. How does this play out for us? When placing pastors in our churches, we must pay attention to character as well as competence. In our credentialing process, we will be committed to assessing character development and habits as much as educational requirements. It is intimidating, overwhelming and humbling to consider, but with dependence on the Spirit, we will aspire to be leaders in the church who are above reproach.



## INVESTING IN multiplication

Our Regional Ministers continue to facilitate and champion disciples making disciples and leaders developing leaders, with a view of seeing multiplication catalyzed in our local churches and community contexts. Learning the Way of Jesus and practicing the ways of Jesus—how He discipled and raised up leaders continues to be a valuable focus of EMCC life and leadership. The recent addition of our National Coach for Leader Development, Krista Bennett, is bearing fruit as she coaches female leaders and future

leaders with a view to build confidence and invest in future leaders. If you know someone considering a call, direct them to Krista. The Next Gen Team (a group of gifted EMCC pastors) continue to huddle Next Gen leaders to model and resource them in relational, discipling ministry to children and youth. In 2023, we will look to hire a point person as a part-time champion of multiplication to stimulate new works and come alongside multiplication initiatives God may be birthing in our hearts.

## PREPARING FOR mission mobilization

**Learning with, connecting and mobilizing people to adaptively participate in Jesus' mission everywhere.**

Coming out of Covid, our churches are enjoying the process of regathering and reorganizing for ministry together. In this season of rebuilding and revitalizing, we must not lose our outward focus. We are called to be on mission together—to see the harvest, pray, give, send and go. The invitation to all of us in to learn, connect and mobilize. To that end, Nicole Jones Qandah, our Director of World Partners has been working to develop and strengthen our relationships with our identified global partners. In 2024, a

long-awaited gathering of our global partners (leaders from Missionary Churches around the world) will take place in Kenya. We seek to come alongside our global partners to support what God has been directing them to do—not show up with our agenda. We are part of the global church and we are learning. We continue to foster the support of our global workers as they engage meaningfully on the frontlines. We are looking to add a part-time Missions Engagement Strategist to the National Team who will be available to consult with local churches in the development and execution of their mission strategy.