

Willowdale CHAPEL



Annual Report 2018-2019

Love God, love each other, and love the world
that Jesus, *through his people*, is working to restore.

The Year of Disciple-Making

That's what we dubbed this last year. It was a year of strengthening the foundations and expanding the reach of this most central part of our calling. As we repeatedly said, "It's never not the year of disciple-making. It's what we do. It's the Great Commission Jesus gave us. But this year we want to get back to basics. We want to strengthen the core, the one essential thing we must do."



So we defined disciples, keeping it plural, because discipleship is a communal, team pursuit. We said, **"Disciples are those who live with the clear aim of having the life of Christ reduplicated in them."**

Disciples are learners, followers, apprentices. They don't just seek to learn a trade or skill, they seek to embody the spirit of their Master.

Then we honed in on that aim. We launched the fall with a teaching series called **Bullseye**, in which we distilled the facets of Christ's life into a target toward which we could aim.

"I put the discipleship target on my refrigerator.
It reminds me every day of what it means to follow Christ."
~ a new member of our church



Simultaneously, we released the first of two discipleship books which we are using as tools to establish us in the gospel. Book one is **Anchored**. It's a journey through the foundations of Christian life and practice—from our identity in Christ to our activity in the world. Numerous small groups used the curriculum, and the reviews have been very positive. We even had adaptations written for youth and children. Book two, **Aimed**, has been written and will be released this fall.

What people said about Anchored:

- “It renewed and reinforced my understanding of the biblical basis for my belief in Christ.”
- “It drew us in and challenged us individually and as a group.”
- “Honestly, my ladies were reluctant about doing this study but said in the end it was amazing. One was a lapsed attender who has been going to church every week now. Another is a Catholic who listens to our sermons every week after Mass.”

Anchored in Christ and Aimed at Christ—if we can live into those realities, who knows what will happen? We will certainly bear much fruit to God’s glory!

In accordance with this, we **overhauled our Belong Class** (for membership in the church), by aligning it with this disciple-making vision and adding a much more personal, one-on-one touch point with either a pastor or elder.



Groups: Where discipleship happens

As we cast the discipleship vision church-wide, our pastors and ministry leaders put feet to it. It was a big year in small group ministry, and our church and world are stronger because of it. We're grateful to everyone who helped drive smart, intentional activity. This included:



Jennersville Women's Ministry, which started on Tuesdays—the counterpart to Wednesdays in Kennett—Involving 36 women in 3 strong groups.

The Women's Summit, hosted by our Jennersville events team, which equipped almost 100 women across both campuses for discipleship.

Designed to Lead Workshops

Small Group Leader Lunch & Learns



Men's Ministry

Our men's ministry relaunched this year under John Kriza, Andy Puffenberger, and a core team of 24 leaders. We now have over 160 men in small groups: That's 100% growth; they doubled in size last year. There was also a retreat that enabled men to go deeper, and a barbecue that connected newcomers and long-termers.

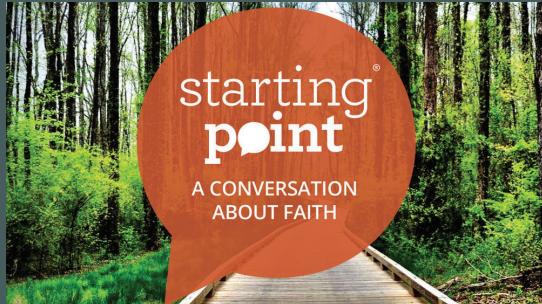
As we say at Willowdale: "Men are the

X factor in any church. Women are the great constant; men are the great variable." We're grateful for men who are making a difference!

"Mark Isabella and I decided to split into two men's groups. It's energizing to see what happened. What was a struggling group of 4 men last year is 2 thriving groups of 12 fired up men this year." ~*Andy Puffenberger*

MOPs Ministry growth:

We added 23% more women and 41% more children. We now serve 160 women, along with their kids, in a thriving ministry.



Starting Point groups

for seekers and new believers have helped many men and women—MOPs moms especially—to find Christ.

“I felt the shackles of shame and fear falling away, and the realization was dawning that God just loves the women in our group and wants to be in relationship with them. There is such freedom (and relief!) in Truth.

Every single woman is a step closer.” ~ *Beth Truax*

Young Adult engagement:

We held several meetings with young adults under 35 to build community and empower leadership. We garnered valuable feedback via a survey, which we have processed together. About 60 people took part, and we’re eager to take additional steps this next year.

Research has shown that young adults drop out of church for a variety of reasons, including moving away to college or having a job that interferes with Sundays. But three prominent reasons we want to take off the table are:

- Church members seem judgmental or hypocritical (26 percent).
- I don’t feel connected to the people at church (20 percent).
- Church members are unfriendly and unwelcoming (15 percent).



We’re grateful for so many leaders at Willowdale, young and old, who are making this a warm and welcoming place for young adults.



Next Generation Ministries

We opened a whole new chapter in this department this year. Several position shifts and new hires took place: On the Kennett campus, Dave Walker now leads high school ministry; Marika Springer became our middle school pastor; Sarah Madison took the overall children's ministry lead, while Julianna Munoz oversees preschool; and Jamie Lindtner was hired to helm the children's ministry in Jennersville. (Thanks to Doug Walker, Melanie Schillinger, and Shelby Cucchi for just staying put!)

This team has gelled well and is taking important strides in re-envisioning their ministries, recruiting and training leaders, expanding small groups, and moving toward more integration with the church as a whole.

That last one—integration with the church as a whole—is one of our grand long-term goals. Silos do not produce lasting discipleship. We need to continually promote intergenerational worship and service.

Thankfully we already have traction in this:



In outreach our children's ministry partners with many of the organizations our church does as a whole. This year our kids raised \$2,000 for Hope International, freed their 19th slave with IJM, and partnered with Urban Promise to pray for children in Wilmington and provide them with school supplies.

In worship we've been blessed by a growing number of young people serving and leading in increasing ways as musicians and vocalists.



In WipeOut our youth and adults serve alongside each other in obvious ways. But this year we took strides forward by appointing a dedicated intern (Emma Schwarz) to coordinate middle school participation, and building a strong team of volunteer high school interns.

In strategy, high school moved to Sunday evenings, knowing that “involvement in all-church worship during high school is more consistently linked with mature faith than any other form of church participation” (Fuller Youth Institute). The research also states, “The more teenagers serve and build relationships with younger children, the more likely it is their faith will stick.” On that score, we currently have over 60 teens serving in our children's ministry every Sunday.



Care Ministries

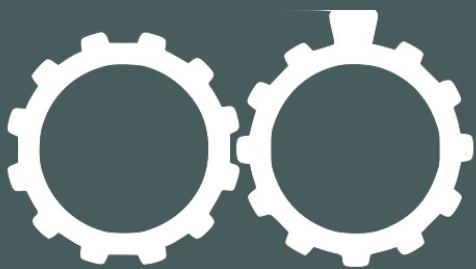
Celebrate Recovery, Re|engage, Special Needs, and Guiding Families (LGBT+ support) fall under the Care banner. These groups are not entirely different from our other groups, they just focus their disciple-making on specific needs or issues. Highlights of the year included:

The Landing Celebrate Recovery for Students

relaunched with a solid team and a fulsome strategy.

Celebrate Recovery

retooled its T.E.A.M., (teaching, encouragement, assimilation, ministry) adding key new leaders.



Re|engage was selected as the training site and ministry model for the northeast United States. About 50% of our Re|engage participants are unchurched or “de-churched,” and many are not only finding help for their marriages, but they are finding faith again.

The Deacon Team developed new systems for tracking those they serve, making sure no one falls through the cracks. They consulted with a group of widows and widowers—including Julianne McElroy who shared a powerful testimony this year—to develop plans for helping those who suffer loss. And on the happier side of life, the deacons developed a “baby ministry” to welcome and encourage new moms and their households.



Guiding Families, our ministry to those facing LGBT+ issues, took great strides this year. Rachel Gilson, our expert mentor, noted the growth. The group completed a course called *Posture Shift: A Model for Inclusion and Care*, that helps us focus on love and inclusion as a precursor to faith. We want to help people find a faith identity deeper than their sexual orientation. This starts with a radical gospel. As the group learned, “A so-called ‘gospel’ of exclusion has no power to reach already banished persons.”



Special Needs not only did its “normal” ministry (that is, “normally spectacular”—Sunday Buddies, Respite Nights, First Fridays, Night to Shine, C.A.S.T. theater—they took steps to partner with a Philadelphia organization, AADD, which serves adults with development disabilities, bringing this much-needed resource to Chester County. This is a very real and ripe growth area for us. Think about how much of Jesus’ ministry was directed toward people with disabilities!



Local and Global Outreach

We continue to invest deeply in our world through partnerships with like-minded, gospel-driven ministries. It's not always brand new initiatives that we celebrate, but faithfulness to the old ones. We faithfully invest time, money, prayer, and relational energy in these people and organizations:

- **Family Promise**
- **The Garage**
- **YoungMoms**
- **Fellowship of Christian Athletes**
- **Good Neighbors**
- **Lincoln University**
- **Spanish Health Ministry**
- **Urban Promise**
- **Bombay Teen Challenge**
- **Gain – Global Aid Network**
- **Hope International**
- **International Justice Mission**
- **Dwaar Church**
- **Missionaries in: South America, North Africa, Central Asia, Southeast Asia**

The highlights of the year include:

- **Madhya Pradesh, India:** We built a home for girls rescued from sex slavery, run by Bombay Teen Challenge. Not only that, but we now have a hand in bringing the gospel to an unreached people group, the Banchada.
- **Thailand:** Sixteen of our people did children's and youth ministry for Bible translators from all over southeast Asia.
- **Thanksgiving Dinner at Urban Promise** was so well-resourced, we had to turn away volunteers.
- **A Ping Pong Tournament** raised awareness and connection with our local ministry partners. We love trying new things.
- **Local Food Cupboards** received double the amount of food we had given in 2018 through GSR, Give|Serve|Restore.
- **Student Athlete Ministry (SAM)**, was started on Tuesday nights at Lincoln University. Various children and families, especially at Jennersville, periodically got connected with SAM as well.



Facilities Work



We undertook renovations of the chapel in Kennett, revamping our most used mid-size space. It will open this fall!



We opened a brand new building in Jennersville. What a gift to our leaders and children. This will be a tool that will serve thousands over the years. Thanks to everyone who invested in the project and helped make the move. Over 370 people now use this space every week.



We moved our offices to 685 Unionville Road, next to the Kennett Campus. We're all finally under one roof, and it has been a game-changer for the cohesiveness of our team.



We gave a facelift to our original building across from the Kennett campus thanks to “Friends of the Old Stone Chapel.”

We concluded our Ripple Effects Campaign this year, which built our new space in Jennersville, renovated the Kennett Chapel (almost finished!), upgraded our AVL systems in Kennett, planted a new church, and built the home for rescued girls in Madhya Pradesh, India!

Other Ministry Highlights:

We welcomed
43 NEW Members

We baptized over
50 NEW People

We launched
31 NEW Groups

We grew to
109 Small Groups

We raised
1.1M To Expand

We hired
4 NEW Staff

The Jennersville Worship Center and lobby

filling all our key leadership roles.



WE (Willowdale en Espanol) grew to 30+ families, averaging over 125 adults/kids weekly

We celebrated milestones.
On Super Bowl Sunday, we had special services across the region: Jennersville worshiped with the chapel community at Lincoln University; Kennett celebrated one year of Willowdale en Espanol with a bilingual service; and our church plant, Project 938, also celebrated its one-year anniversary.





We relaunched WipeOut Camp in Jennersville. After a hiatus for construction, WipeOut was back and better than ever. And at both campuses new ideas and program innovations—“culinary arts” for example—strengthened the ministry.

We coached and consulted...

...with a church in Delaware to start their own Re|engage.

...with a church in Chester County to develop their own special needs ministry and Night to Shine prom.

...with Dwaar Church in New Delhi, helping them to hire an executive director to partner with Pastor Samir.

We prayed hard. We worked hard.
We worshiped and served with passion and
faithfulness, and God brought the fruit.
There's nothing better than being his coworkers,
together with you, and seeing the gospel grow.

Let's do it again.

Financials

Fiscal Year 2018-2019

(projected through July 31)

Ministry Fund: **\$2,821,000**

Building Fund: **\$1,132,000**

Care Fund: **\$82,000**

Total Giving: **\$4,035,000**

We had 629 givers (individuals and families)

Total Expenditures: \$4,764,000*

*This includes \$1.7M in Ripple Effects expenditures,
much of which was received in 2018.*

Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Ministry Budget

\$3,063,397

This is a 5% reduction from our 2019 budget. It reflects the unfortunate fact that while we had a great ministry year, our giving to the Ministry Fund (our general budget) was the lowest since 2013-14.

God is alive in our midst. His gospel is bearing fruit. We hope you feel the thrill and satisfaction of being a part of all he is doing at Willowdale Chapel. We're grateful for everyone who makes this a strong and beautiful church family.

Join us in prayerfully remedying our giving challenge. Giving is an act of worship and obedience to God. His people always set aside the first part of their income to him. And we trust you see that Willowdale is a great kingdom investment. We are proclaiming the good news of God's kingdom and doing abundant good works.

Thanks for being on mission with us!