



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

RISK SOMETHING BIG
FOR SOMETHING GOOD.
thechangemakerinitiative.org

Prepared By:

Yvonne Murray
Kim Jones
Karen Kehlet

Message from the Executive Director

When this small church experiment began five years ago at Los Altos United Methodist Church, we had no idea where it would go, no expectations. But we sensed something energizing was happening, that God was doing something new. So we just kept taking the next faithful step. Fast forward a few years and add two Lilly Endowment Grants to the mix, and we have been fortunate to engage and learn with lots of congregations and partners.

In 2023 we (re)designed and ran three programs – one for individual laypeople, one for congregations, and one for young adults. In all of these spaces, we see people coming alive as they reflect, listen, and experiment to make change in their families, work, schools, neighborhoods, and communities. We come alongside people of all ages who are yearning for connection and taking steps to find and create it. We watch people take risks with curiosity and humility, entering into realms and partnerships that aren't always the most comfortable or familiar. Through their exploration of the stories of Jesus, participants glean fresh insights and deepen their personal spirituality with newfound confidence.



This year also involved many areas of expansion for The Changemaker Initiative. We ventured into new geographical places across the US with a wider range of denominations. Diverse young adults who aren't part of faith communities joined this work, too. And we achieved 501(c)(3) status, enabling us to broaden our reach and funding possibilities going forward.

All of us, individuals and churches, have had our worlds disrupted by the pandemic. And as we move forward with greater purpose and intentionality, this changemaking work is more important and resonant than ever. And it's full of hope and wonder. We celebrate all the changemakers who are coming alive and can't wait to see what is next. Let's keep risking something big for something good.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kim Jones".

Kim Jones

Co-founder and Executive Director



Our Story



Pastor Kathi McShane sensed that people in her congregation wanted to make a real difference in their community. Yet they didn't quite know how, or in what ways that work connected to their faith.

As Co-founder, she cast the vision for tapping into fresh language for the Gospel, and a new approach for putting faith into action.

Key Milestones

2018

An Experiment

Los Altos United Methodist Church partnered with Ashoka, inviting 25 people to engage, with transformative results.

2020

Thriving Congregations Grant

LAUMC is awarded a \$1M grant from Lilly Endowment to expand this work with other congregations over 5 years.

2022

Young Adult Initiative Grant

A second grant of \$1.5M is received from Lilly Endowment to adapt and develop a program for young adults over 5 years.

2023

Nonprofit Status

The Changemaker Initiative achieves 501(c)(3) status, to broaden partnership and funding opportunities.



Our Mission: Empowering Change

OUR WHY

The Changemaker Initiative (TCI) is driven by our mission to catalyze meaningful change by empowering individuals and congregations to live out the power of their faith through tangible action. Through our three innovative programs, we equip participants to lead transformative projects within their communities, fostering deeper connections and renewal. We have witnessed profound transformations within both individuals and communities through these programs, all centered on our multi-module curriculum anchored on the model of Jesus as a changemaker.

OUR WHAT

We pursue our mission through three main programs:

- **Changemaker Fellowship** for individuals
- **Becoming a R.I.S.K.-Taking Church** for congregational teams
- **Change the Story** for young adults paired with a congregational team

OUR TEAM



Kim Jones
Co-Founder
Executive Director



Karen Kehlet
Director of Learning



Yvonne Murray
Director, Community
Engagement



Rev. Kathi McShane
Co-Founder
Theologian-in-Residence



Ty Paxton
Program Director
Change the Story



Rev. Jeremy Steele
Church & Culture
Translator



Natalia Gabrea
Coach and
Instructor



Rev. Lindsey Bell-Kerr
Instructor, Facilitator



Empowering Individuals: The Changemaker Fellowship

Since 2018, approximately 100 participants, ranging from 12 to 80 years old, have engaged in our Changemaker Fellowship. Engaging in parallel threads of self-reflection, project work, and studying Gospel stories, Fellows are inspired to become compassion-driven Changemakers like Jesus. Individuals connect their faith, personal gifts, and concerns for their community to initiate projects that make a difference where they live, work, and worship.

Our Fellows come from diverse backgrounds and life stages, each discovering or rediscovering ways to take risks and apply their faith as compassion-driven Changemakers like Jesus. By equipping participants with the tools and support needed, we aim to create sustained positive change by catalyzing a critical mass of empowered individuals committed to driving positive change in their neighborhoods.

Pam

Pam's project grew out of her desire to participate in, and inspire others toward, environmental stewardship. She used her organizing skills and partnered with her congregation to create a neighborhood composting site on church property.



Christy

Christy, a former foster care youth, used her Fellowship experience to expand her organization that provides critical parenting classes in Los Angeles. She partners with county court and foster care systems and utilizes church spaces to create a safe and supportive environment for her community.

Empowering Congregations: Becoming a R.I.S.K.-Taking Church

Since our inception, TCI has empowered 12 congregations spanning five different denominations across six states. With each cohort, we witness a flourishing of faith in action, as congregations come alive with renewed purpose and vigor. Together, we are forging a path towards a more compassionate, connected, and equitable society, one project at a time.

Our Congregational Team program serves congregations seeking renewal and relevance in an ever-changing world. Led by a pastor and lay partner, participating teams embark on a journey of intentional listening and discovery. Through this process, they unearth new avenues to express their faith, leading to the emergence of life-giving projects that address pressing needs within their neighborhoods.



Endeavors emerging out of these changemaker churches:

- Lunch program for lonely seniors, partnering with local restaurants
- Guided nature walks as a spiritual approach to anxiety
- Partnering with and providing baked goods to an LGBTQIA+ organization
- Comprehensive wellness program for church and community members
- Dinner groups in a spread-out rural church longing for connection
- Listening program to help people feel seen and heard
- Creating a computer/study center for community youth after school



Empowering Young Adults: Change the Story

This program matches unchurched young adults, ages 23–29, with faith communities and supports them as they build a social justice project together. We believe that through collective action on a specific issue, people will realize their commonalities rather than focus on their differences. And in turn, this will foster intergenerational connection, a sense of belonging, and shared goals between two groups with a self-reported disconnect.

Change the Story helps both parties find a new story through mutual learning and collaboration led by the vision and passion of young adults. Young adults participate in training and mentorship around design thinking, leadership, and strategic collaborations. Faith communities learn from and with the younger generation, as they take on a supportive role. Additionally, we provide monetary grants of up to \$10,000 and ongoing coaching to further their initiatives.



Sarah

Sarah's vision for a communal space for young adults and artists of color found resonance with Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church, as they collaborated to transform a garage into a Social Justice Library. This project not only meets the need for communal spaces but also fosters critical dialogue and community building.

Kenan

Kenan's commitment to racial justice resonated with St. Andrew's Episcopal Church. With Kenan leading the way, the church is leveraging its resources, relationships, and local connections to expand awareness and participation in an annual Juneteenth Festival in Los Altos that Kenan started several years ago.



Changemaking requires collaboration



Not only do we encourage changemakers to collaborate, we seek that posture in our work as well. In 2022, we joined the Isaiah Partnership, an initiative of Princeton Theological Seminary to evaluate clergy education. This cohort program involved congregations representing a variety of denominations, geographic locations, ethnicities, and sizes. We are grateful for continued opportunities to learn and apply our changemaker content.

Looking forward: Our Vision for 2024

First half of 2024

- Complete the 8-month Individual and Congregational cohort programs that kicked off in August of 2023
- Pilot *Jesus as a Changemaker* small group study with several churches, exploring the teachings of Jesus as a foundation for modern-day social change
- Celebrate the completion of our October 2023 Change the Story cohort and their work together
- Launch 1 new Change the Story cohort, incorporating young adult alumni into lead roles
- Engage our broad changemaker community in relevant topics with authors and leaders in the ecosystem through quarterly conversations and webinars
- Increase communication and storytelling with our national changemaker participants through newsletter and social media channels

Second half of 2024

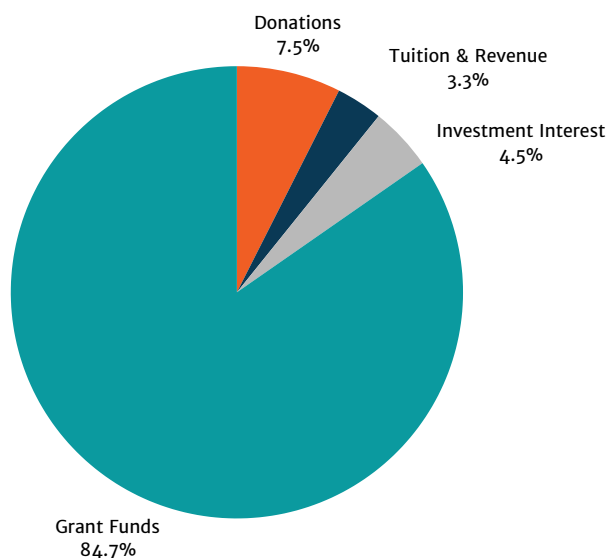
- Host *Momentum*, a gathering of 35 thought-leaders to delve into strategies for expanding this movement of compassion-driven changemakers
- Launch 1-2 new young adult Change the Story cohorts, expanding our reach and impact
- Evaluate our learnings and begin developing a plan for scaling and long-term sustainability
- Investigate and diversify funding sources beyond current grants

In 2024, we remain steadfast in our dedication to nurturing changemakers who embody compassion and drive societal transformation. We invite you to join us in this mission, as we collectively work towards a more compassionate and just world.

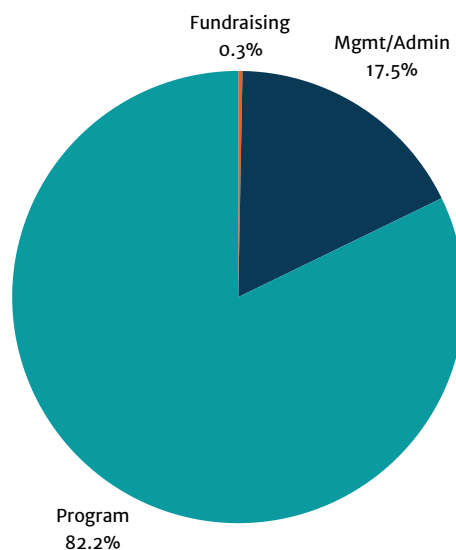


Our Financial Performance

Total Revenue



Expense Ratios



Our Advisory Board 2021–2023



Elan Babchuck



Dori Baker



Kenda Creasy Dean



Reggie Nichols



Julien Phillips



Daniel Pryogle



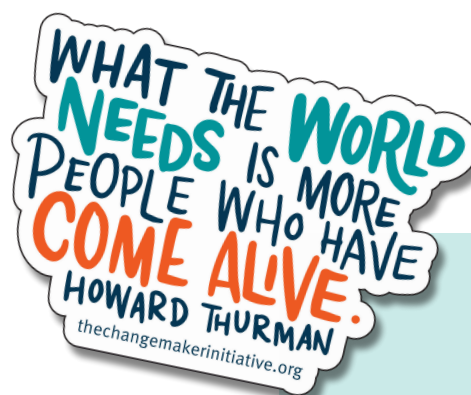
Evan Taylor



Debbie Weatherspoon



Grateful to our partners and supporters:



Thank you for enabling us to spark others to make a difference!



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