

2019  
**Annual  
Report**



**The Meeting House**

# The Meeting House

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## Our Vision

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

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## Our Values

### Community

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

### Mission

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

Peace

### Peace

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

Community

Simplicity

### Simplicity

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

Mission

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

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What a privilege to be part of this extended church family! Thank you for everything you've invested in this community we call The Meeting House. Over the past year, we've experienced so much encouragement and transformation within and through our church. As you'll see in this report, there's a lot to celebrate!

Now looking ahead, we want to build on where we've been and who we are, so we're thrilled to be moving into an extended season of **Go**. We believe we become the best version of ourselves when we reach beyond ourselves to engage people who have never meaningfully encountered the good news of Jesus. This renewed commitment to evangelism and discipleship is a key moment in our history, and we can't wait to continue growing, serving, and loving well together!

Faith, Hope, and Love,

**Darrell, Bruxy, Rod, and Maggie**  
Senior Pastors and Overseers Chair

# Your generosity makes ministry happen.

Thank you for being part of the 3,500+ people who gave offerings this past year to support our vision. **Together, this looks like:**

## Compassion & Agency Support

Supporting people in our own communities and around the world through local initiatives and our partnerships with World Vision, MCC, and BIC Canada Global

## Kids & Youth

Discipling our kids and youth through curriculum production, programming, staffing, classroom supplies, and subsidies for our youth retreats



## Adult Ministries

Funding Home Church, local events, volunteer training and appreciation, plus resourcing and salaries for our site pastors

## Shared Ministry Expenses

Resourcing and training for our staff team and covering administrative costs and salaries for our senior pastors, IT, accounting, and HR staff

## Facilities & Rent

Renting spaces for Sunday mornings, meetings, and rehearsals and funding storage facilities, utilities, and maintenance at the Oakville site

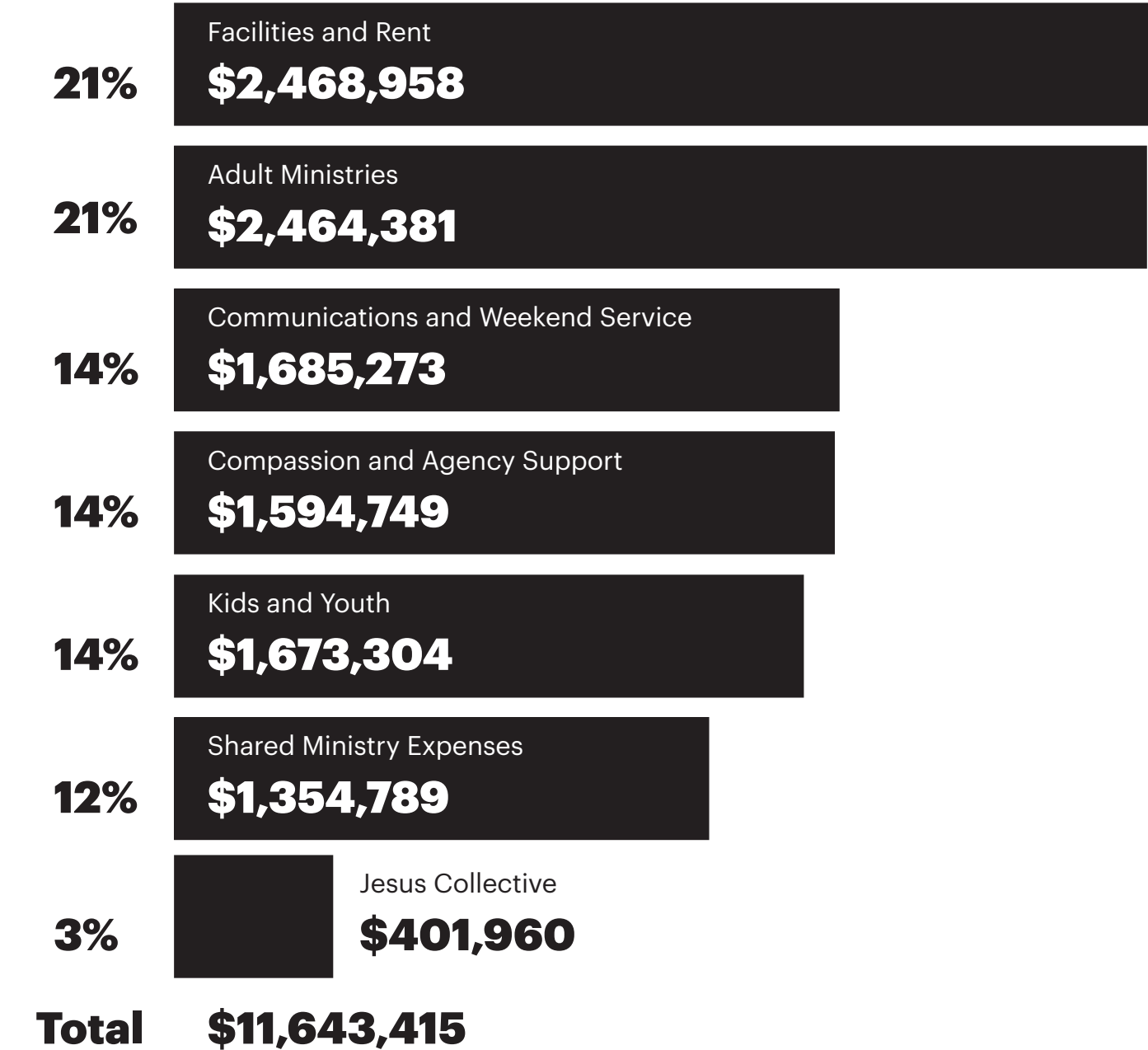


**Communications & Weekend Service**

Producing and distributing Sunday teaching to our sites and online community and funding tech, site support, and communications staff

**Jesus Collective**

Planning, promoting, and organizing the framework for Jesus Collective’s pilot phase and inviting others to join



# Our impact is measured by His hands and feet.

We have so much to be thankful for during our last fiscal year. Here are some of the **things we're celebrating**:

**8** First Nation communities in Northern Ontario increased seasonal food production by planting 30 gardens with the kits donated through our support of MCC's Indigenous Program

**27** people with a history of sexual offence were supported through Circles of Support and Accountability, protecting communities and offenders during reintegration

**30** Nigerian youth who were engaged in violence joined an intensive mentorship program where they learned vocational skills and peacebuilding advocacy

**75** Baptisms

# 319

Home Church elders received training since August 2019 as part of our unified Home Church development

# 750

students participated in Peace Clubs in Zambia, learning how to be peacemakers in their neighbourhoods and transforming the culture of the cities they live in



# 2,500

Volunteers

# 3,912

people benefited from the 978 Relief Kits we sent to Jordan





## Attendance

# 2,065

Home Church total

# 4,075

Kids & Youth total

# 5,759

Highest Sunday service

# 6,606

Christmas Eve service

# 7,444

Easter service

# \$250,000

of our **Local Compassion Fund** was distributed to 23 partner organizations across our sites

# \$350,000

has been given to **World Vision's Raw Hope** program to-date, providing basic needs and space for children and families to heal

## Online & Media Engagement (this fiscal year)

# 734,148

Podcast downloads

# 4.9 Mil.

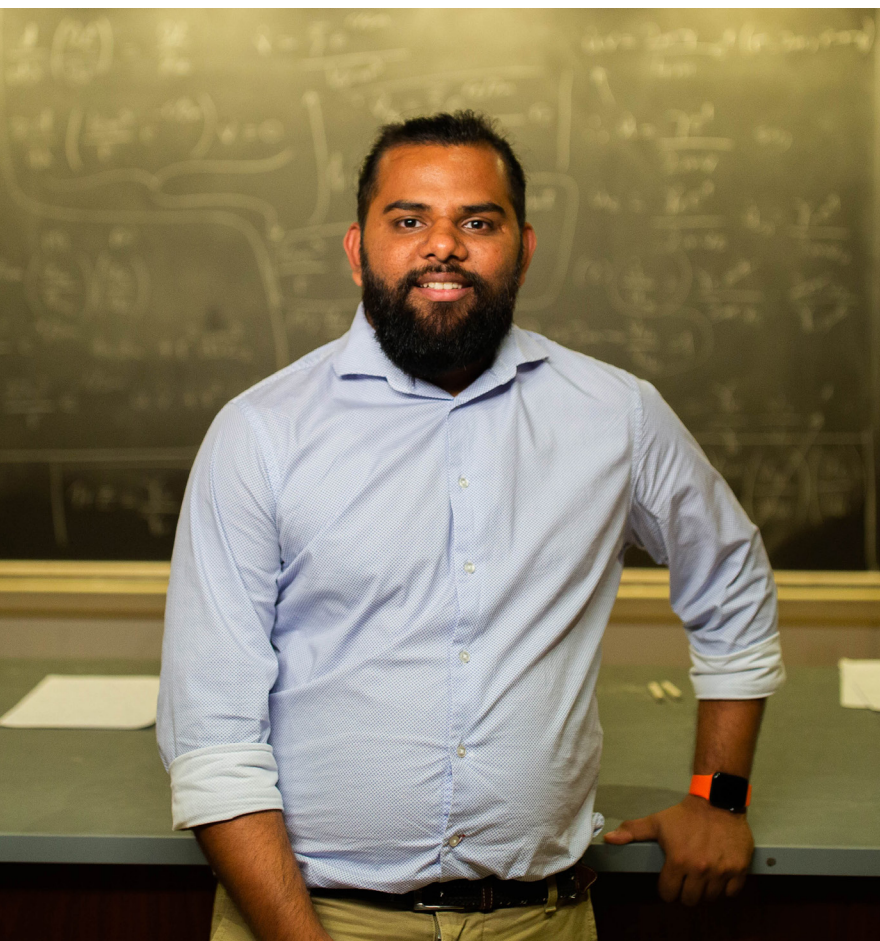
Minutes watched on YouTube

# 70%

of visitors to our website were **new**

# We choose to be intentional in our areas of focus.

Everything we do as a church is in pursuit of our vision: to introduce spiritually curious people to the Jesus-centred life, through a movement of Jesus-centred churches. Across all our sites and beyond, people are living this out, and we want to share their stories.



## Asking Questions

**Nik is currently pursuing** a PhD in Astrophysics at Queen's University. Growing up in India, he had always been interested in science and learning about the universe, but he found that his Hindu faith often conflicted with his curiosity. "Asking more and more questions and not getting any answers to those questions sort of made me move away from any sort of spiritual connection," he explains. Later, as a young adult studying physics, Nik began to identify as an atheist: "It looked simpler to me to be able to not believe anything and just go forward with science. . . . But those questions never really went away."

After moving to Canada, Nik met Christine, who started having conversations with him about spirituality and invited him to The Meeting House in Kingston. "Right out of the bat, the people at my church were just so welcoming," Nik says. "It took a while for me to get convinced, but I got answers. . . . The more I sat through Sunday services and the more I spent time with them, I realized it's about this dude Jesus." Over time, Nik began to realize that his faith didn't have to conflict with his studies: "I don't think believing in the presence of God really prevents me from doing science at all. . . . [Creation] is far more complex, and I think science tells us that."

Having a small, intimate community was key for Nik in creating a space to learn, explore, and grow in faith. "Coming to Canada and being a part of The Meeting House and my Home Church, I think I felt safe enough to be able to ask questions, understand Jesus more, understand how to live a loving and a serving life more." Today, he still has questions, but he no longer sees them as obstacles to avoid or overcome — instead, they are an integral part of his faith journey. "The more I investigate questions, the more I understand Jesus and the more I understand how much I have to go to even come closer to be like Jesus. So those questions are not discouraging. They're more encouraging than anything, and for me, I look at them as learning opportunities."





## Journeying Together

**Christine came to The Meeting House** for the first time during her undergrad at Queen's University. "I just remember being so drawn to it because it's a very small group in Kingston. It was so intimate, and just as soon as you went you felt welcome," she says. "It was just nice to have a safe space to talk and ask questions and explore different ideas."

A few years later, Christine met Nik through their Master's program. "Throughout that year we got to know each other really well and talked about all sorts of things that we cared about and really started to develop a deep friendship." During their discussions, Nik began opening up about his own faith background and the questions he had. Then one Sunday, he decided to join Christine at The Meeting House and continued to come throughout the fall and winter. "I could see how there was so much unknown for him, but he still could take away so

much encouragement," Christine says. "It was cool to see God just totally meet Nik where he was at."

Journeying through faith together certainly strengthened their friendship, but it also required learning and growth on both sides. "I think a lot of it for me was trying to let go of the need to have the right answers," Christine says. "The role for me was just to be there for him and just to be a good friend." For Nik, it meant redefining his ideas of being in relationship and receiving love. "I think what was so overwhelming for him was that he never knew love this unconditional. . . . It just took a long time for him to hear you don't have to do anything — that Jesus just loves you and just wants a relationship with you."

"I think it was just really humbling to know that God would partner with me," Christine says on helping Nik come to faith. "To see somebody else experience it for the first time, it really brought me back in a lot of ways to when I first came to know Christ." The key for her was establishing that friendship and trust from the beginning and allowing God to do the rest. As an encouragement to those trying to reach the spiritually curious, she says, "Just be a good friend, be open and question together. . . . But then also I'd probably say to somebody that God is so in control, that Jesus is good news and encounters people personally, so he knows however your friend needs to experience him."

## Rediscovering God

**Kanwar grew up as** a Sikh in India. He recalls going to the temple for celebrations and witnessing his mother's prayers as a child, but he never felt like it connected with his own faith journey. "I didn't find any inspiration, I would say, outside of my home environment. . . . But growing up I never lost touch with God. There was never a point where I stopped believing in God, so I think that's something that I've always acknowledged."



After moving to Toronto with his family and completing an undergrad in Computer Science, Kanwar became more and more distant from any kind of faith, but then his girlfriend invited him to The Meeting House. “I was intrigued because I’d never had that exposure,” he says, “but also the fact that I think to some extent there was something in me that wanted to see an example of it.” The two of them went to the Uptown Toronto site one Sunday morning, and Kanwar was surprised by the diversity and warmth of the people there. “I saw a lot of different kinds of people — different types, different age groups. . . . It was really welcoming, the whole environment, and I think that really made a difference.”

Although Kanwar began to resonate with the accessibility and openness of the teaching, he still struggled to find his place within this new faith. “It definitely happened over a period of time, because in the beginning I had all these questions,” he remarks. At one point, he attended a Punjabi church and spoke with the pastor there about religion, identity, and transitioning from Sikhism. “[The pastor] said that whatever questions he had from the Sikh scripture that he didn’t have the answers to, he found the answers in the Bible . . . It was very simple. In a sense it was like a closure to the question I had in my head for a long time.”

Kanwar is currently pursuing a degree in teacher’s college, and his passion for teaching and connecting with others now inspires him to share his faith. “What makes it easier for me to believe is the hope that I can . . . share the story with someone else who comes from a different background, comes from a different upbringing,” he says. “That’s really something that I think motivates me.” He still considers himself on a journey, but he’s excited to be part of a space where he can continue to ask questions and connect. “[Coming to The Meeting House] gave me a lot of clarity, it gave me a lot of meaning, and it helped me understand and relate to God to a degree that I think was missing, even though I always believed in God. . . . Grace and love can really change lives — it’s not just inspiring, but it’s life-changing.”



## Becoming Known

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**Sonia was raised in** the Catholic church, but her view of God was never a relational one. “As I was growing up, I always saw God . . . as a very angry God, and a vengeful God, and a God who was disappointed in me,” she says. “My whole life I thought I had to be perfect to be seen and to be heard.” Talking about faith with family and friends at that time felt foreign and uncomfortable — it was easier not to think about it, and so Sonia eventually stopped going to church.

Then as a young adult, she began to question her identity and beliefs. “I reached a point in my life where I needed to start making my own decisions and deciding what I believed in,” Sonia says. “Inside I still felt something, but I just didn’t know what it was.” Moving to Hamilton felt like a fresh start, and as she began to explore her faith again, she found The Meeting House online and went the next Sunday. “It was a huge shock to the system for me, but in a good way,” she recalls. “I was already finding things I could apply to daily life. . . . It kept me wanting to go.”

A few weeks later, Sonia heard about Home Church. She was curious about the relational and practical focus of it and decided to try the one hosted by Jimmy, the Lead Pastor. “Within five minutes, it felt like I’d known these people my whole life, like we just clicked,” she recalls. “It wasn’t at all what I expected.” For Sonia, Home Church became a way to connect with people and do life together, to grow, learn, and dialogue alongside them. “They’re people that I may have not known for a long time, but I feel like I’ve known them longer than friends I’ve had for 25 years in my life because of just how deep these connections go.”

Later that year, Sonia began to think about baptism. “It was something I wanted to do, but again those feelings of not being good enough kept surfacing.” After months of prayer and support, she came to realize that baptism isn’t something you earn — “it comes down to wanting to live a life with Christ and wanting to journey with people through that.” The turning point for her was three words: God is love. “It’s really that simple, and



it's something I needed to hear my whole life, and I never heard it until then. . . . I realized that's the God I need to see, and that's the God that's always been there."

Sonia was baptized in June 2017, and she now leads a Home Church at the Downtown Hamilton site. As an elder, she has the opportunity to welcome and help people who are spiritually curious. "That's what I want to be in our community, that's what I want to do in someone's spiritual journey. I just want to be there, I want to journey with people."

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## Beginning a Movement

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**Angela is a pastor from** northern California. She first began working at her parents' church plant after finishing Bible college, and the community she encountered there renewed her sense of mission and purpose. "I just fell in love with what I had always dreamed I could do with my faith," she says. "I knew what God had to offer [my community], and I knew it was the church's job to show them that."

In more recent years, just as her own church has been undergoing a kind of rebirth, Angela came to hear about Jesus Collective. Right away, she resonated with the values, mission, and focus: "These people are talking about the questions that I've been asking now for 20 years . . . I just couldn't wait to get to be part of the conversation." For her, the network presents a potential space to connect with other like-minded leaders as well as affirmation in her own questions and ideas. "It feels like God is already doing something through Jesus Collective whether I'm part of it or not, but I really want to be part of a movement. I really want to be part of this thing and be shaped by it and then shape the community."



Rick is a pastor at Port City Community Church in North Carolina. "We're a big church in a small community of people who don't necessarily know Jesus," he says. "It's a real mix of people that are there that we're trying to reach and trying to encourage in their walk with Christ." A few years ago, Rick felt a call from the Holy Spirit to simplify his faith and re-focus on Jesus. He began to discover more and more people with the same conviction, and then he heard about Jesus Collective when Bruxy came to speak at his church.

"I think the relational aspect of this, kind of learning what other people are seeing and exploring the kingdom together, is probably



the thing that excites me the most." For Rick, Jesus Collective presents a much-needed opportunity to expand perspectives and learn from fellow Jesus-followers. As a pastor with a passion for discipleship, his hope is to see different people coming together in a posture of humility and openness. "One of the most important things about our discipleship is who we surround ourselves with," he remarks. "Being able to collect all these people together in a network and talk with them and share with them in a relational way is a way for me to grow in my own discipleship. . . . As I grow and as we grow, that has huge influence on the churches that we lead."

Learn more about the movement at [jesuscollective.com](https://jesuscollective.com)

# The Meeting House

"...God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth."

(1 Timothy 3:15)

To view our complete 2019 Annual Report, Financial Audit, and Proxy Ballot, go to  
**[themeetinghouse.com/annualreport](https://themeetinghouse.com/annualreport)**

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