

# 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

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the meeting  
**house**





**David Lees**  
*Chair, Overseers*

Pausing to reflect on this past year, I am encouraged by what God is doing through our Meeting House family. We had a successful first year of Peacemakers, helping to launch this unique campaign with MCC. At the same time, our community exceeded our general budget, stretching and growing us in sharing God's love. We see this in the development of our kids and youth teaching, which generates global interest and impacts over 10,000 children each week. Annual Town Halls have created more opportunities to discern God's will together. We celebrate the release of Bruxy's book *(re)union*, the tens of thousands of people tracking with our podcasts from around the globe, and an increase in baptisms.

I mention these not as part of a checklist showing we've been busy, but as evidence we are living out who God has called us to be. John 15 says we are chosen and appointed that we would go and bear fruit. Our connection to God should look fruitful when we live out of the fullness of who we are in Christ.

I am thankful for the wise leadership of Bruxy, Rod, and Darrell, and on behalf of the overseers, I want to thank our community of Christ followers who pray, give, serve, support, and volunteer.

I am more excited than ever as we continue to ask what God wants to do in and through us in ways that we have never explored before. Please keep praying and hang on.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Lees".



**Bruxy Cavey**  
*Teaching Pastor*

It's eight o'clock, wake-up time!

Do you remember our Discipleship Cycle? The "GO" icon is at nine o'clock, representing the year we're heading into. This past year of looking inward and upward, growing closer to God and each other, prepared us to now look outward. We learned to be peacemakers and to live with less stuff. We were inspired by our roots in the Radical Reformation and encouraged by the leadership of Moses. We learned how to communicate that we can have (re)union with God and one another. And now we're eager to share the Gospel.

I am thrilled to hear this echoed from many of you—that we as a church family are at the right place at the right time; that it feels like 8 o'clock, time to wake up and get ready to "GO."

Jesus said "Follow me, and I will send you out to fish for people" (Matthew 4:19). What a privilege to follow Jesus, to draw closer to Jesus, to be educated by Jesus, to know and be known by Jesus! And Jesus goes on to say that when we follow him, we will not only become his students, his apprentices, but we also become his ambassadors as he sends us out to share this opportunity with more people.

I am excited for the renewed emphasis on evangelism, not as a year long project, but as a season of time for The Meeting House that God will use to introduce many to the good news of Jesus.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruxy".

# FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

**Thank you for faithfully supporting** the work of our church this past year. We truly depend on your offerings to fuel all our ministries. The majority of our income (96%) comes from individual donors, with the remainder coming from renting our Oakville facility and a few other miscellaneous sources. Our heart is to honour your generosity and steward these gifts in cost effective ways that allow us to extend God's kingdom here at The Meeting House.

This past year was a bit of an anomaly for The Meeting House, and that was reflected in our finances. We encountered a substantial staff change at the very beginning of the year which resulted in some significant positions not filled for much of the year. At the same time, we had some rental cost savings. These two situations resulted in spending well below budget by \$473,000. Despite some of these staff challenges, God blessed us beyond expectation last year with increased offerings in general, as well as a few special one-time donations that we do not anticipate receiving on a regular basis in the future. The result was a total income approximately \$383,000 over budget. The cumulative effect produced a net cash flow of \$856,000 over budget which

allowed us to transfer funds to the Growth and Property Funds to meet some specific needs.

A major project that we have talked about for a few years is a significant repair of the roof at the Oakville production site. The Overseers approved a \$550,000 transfer to the Property Fund to begin the next phase of this repair project. Some of these funds will also be used to support our regional sites with the replacement of aging equipment and vehicles, and other such needs. We also transferred \$250,000 to the Growth Fund to help support the creation of kids and youth curriculum. The Compassion Fund was again well supported, allowing us to distribute almost \$1 million to many compassion agencies, refugee support initiatives, and peace work.

It is with deep gratitude that we offer this financial report. The trust and generosity offered to us by our community gives The Meeting House opportunities to follow God's leading as we build loving communities of Jesus-followers. Our commitment to you is that we will continue to walk in the way of Jesus toward simplicity, stewarding your financial gifts thoughtfully and responsibly. Thank you for partnering with us!



Judy Maranta  
CPA, CMA  
Finance Manager



Mathew Moore  
CPA, CA  
Treasurer



Rod Tombs  
Senior Pastor

# FINANCES AT A GLANCE

## Compassion & Agency Support

As a community, we are compassionate givers! This category includes supporting the work of our local and global partners. We are able to resource over 19 agencies connected with our sites' communities here in Canada. In addition, we partner with the international work of World Vision, MCC, and the global church through BIC Canada Global. Funds for benevolence within our church community, supporting staff, and site-directed compassion initiatives are also included in this category.

## Kids & Youth

We are big on investing in the next generation. From birth to high school graduation, we work hard to engage our kids in a lifelong relationship with Jesus. This category includes both local and cross-regional staff, the production of kids and youth curriculum, program budgets, classroom supplies, curriculum materials, and subsidies for our twice-annual youth retreats.

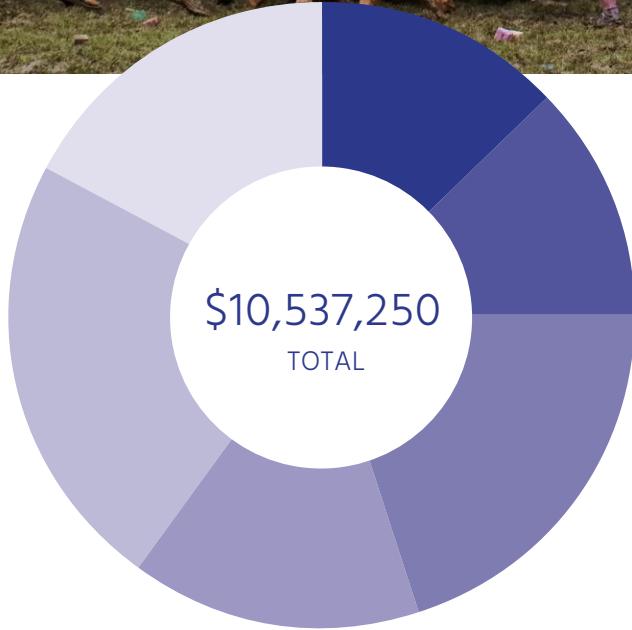
## Adult Ministries

Sunday services and home church form the foundation of our Adult Ministries. It's the two-winged bird that flies! Other resources that fuel learning and build community also fit in this category, including funds for local site events, worship services like Renew, training and appreciation for our amazing volunteers, as well as resourcing and salaries for our site pastors.





Our youth and leaders had a colourful time at this year's Spring Youth Retreat.



- 13% ● Compassion & Agency Support
- 12% ● Kids & Youth
- 20% ● Adult Ministries
- 15% ● Shared Ministry Expenses
- 23% ● Facilities & Rent
- 17% ● Communications & Weekend Service

The above represents the consolidation of all three funds, General, Compassion, and Growth, throughout the 2016–2017 fiscal year.

## Shared Ministry Expenses

This category is where the behind-the-scenes magic happens. Funding for our often-unrecognized teams, without which, well, we would have a very hard time getting through each week! It includes salaries for our Senior Pastors and their support staff, our IT, Accounting, and HR staff, as well as funds for resourcing, training, and appreciating our staff team as a whole.

## Facilities & Rent

Our model relies heavily on rented spaces from movie theatres to high schools for Sunday mornings, midweek youth spaces, rehearsal rooms, and storage facilities for our trucks and trailers. This approach keeps us flexible and keeps costs down. The one facility we own not only serves the needs of our Oakville site, but it is in very high demand as a rental facility, generating nearly \$350,000 in income after expenses. This category includes utilities, maintenance, and facilities staff.

## Communications & Weekend Service

This category includes costs related to adult teaching – both staff and equipment – to produce and distribute Sunday's message to our sites and online community. This category also pays for our trucks, trailers, and equipment for all ministry areas, as well as the cross-regional staff that support them, including tech, logistics, and communications.

# GENERAL FUND



This is the primary fund that helps us **live** and proclaim the irreligious message of Jesus. You can think of it as the bread and butter that keeps The Meeting House alive and functioning. It enables us to pay for ministry: locations, equipment, maintenance, trucks, trailers, and staff salaries.

## Karl's Story

**For most of his adult life,** Karl was very comfortably an atheist. His best friend however was a Christian, and one of the things Karl liked about him was that he didn't differentiate between Karl and his Christian friends. That he treated everyone equally stood out to Karl because of the judgment and segregation that he had felt from some other Christians.

Curiosity struck on a Sunday in 1990, and Karl went to The Meeting House Oakville and listened to the teaching. He even bought a Bible, but gave up on it halfway through Genesis, and didn't continue coming on Sundays. Karl moved away, and has since lived in more than seven different cities across Canada. Through all the packing and unpacking, there was something that pushed him to keep that Bible, and to keep it in pristine condition.

Over the last number of years, Karl increasingly felt that the world was becoming a darker, more destitute place, as if there were more and more



Karl (right) with Phil Shamas, our pastor at The Meeting House Kitchener.

I have learned through Jesus how to get along with people better than before, how to restore relationships, and how to live a better life with less anger and jealousy.

people without souls. He felt there was a strong contrast between light and dark, but he still didn't make any move to seek God.

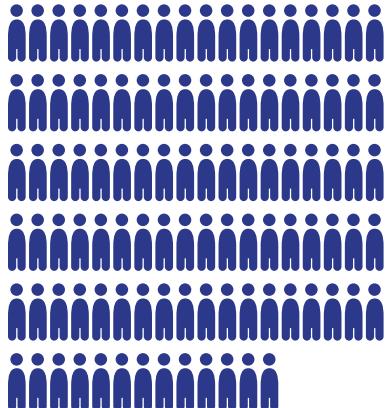
Last year, Karl felt an odd nudge to pray for his friend whose grandmother was in a coma. This was the first time he had ever tried to talk to God, and he found it to be a very emotional experience.

A few weeks later, Karl's friend told him that his grandmother had miraculously woken from her deep coma – the doctors couldn't believe it. She was able to spend time with her family, and assured them she was fine and that she knew she was going to a nice place. Her family was able to say goodbye before she passed away peacefully later that night.

Karl's comfortable atheism dissolved right then, and he knew that the odd nudge was God speaking to him. He immediately started asking questions about God and a friend recommended he check out The Meeting House Kitchener. Karl fell in love with the community there right away. "I have learned through Jesus how to get along with people better than before, how to restore relationships, and how to live a better life with less anger and jealousy" says Karl. Since coming to the Kitchener community, Karl joined the music team and got baptized over the summer. When it comes to Jesus, he now can't help but ask: "Why wouldn't everybody want this?"



138  
Baptisms\*



5,172 average Sunday  
morning attendance<sup>†</sup>



1,184  
average home  
church attendance\*



2,087  
committed  
volunteers\*

612 Kidmax visitors<sup>†</sup>



### Nadia's Story

**Nadia is 17.** She lives in Toronto with her mom, dad, and younger sister. Like many teenagers, Nadia enjoys playing games on her tablet. She is also on the autism spectrum, and is minimally verbal. She has occasional vocal outbursts and has a difficult time being around people she doesn't know. Because of this, Nadia and her family have had a tough time finding a church where they could really thrive. Eventually, they tried attending The Meeting House. They met one of our incredible youth pastors, Ryan Karayiannis, who invited Nadia to come to youth group. Nadia required a one-on-one support person, which Ryan was able to arrange.

Finally, Nadia and her family have found a place where they can be part of a church community together. During Midweek Youth, Nadia has the opportunity to listen to the video teaching and be part of a small group discussion setting. Nadia's younger sister, Lauren, is also part of the youth group.

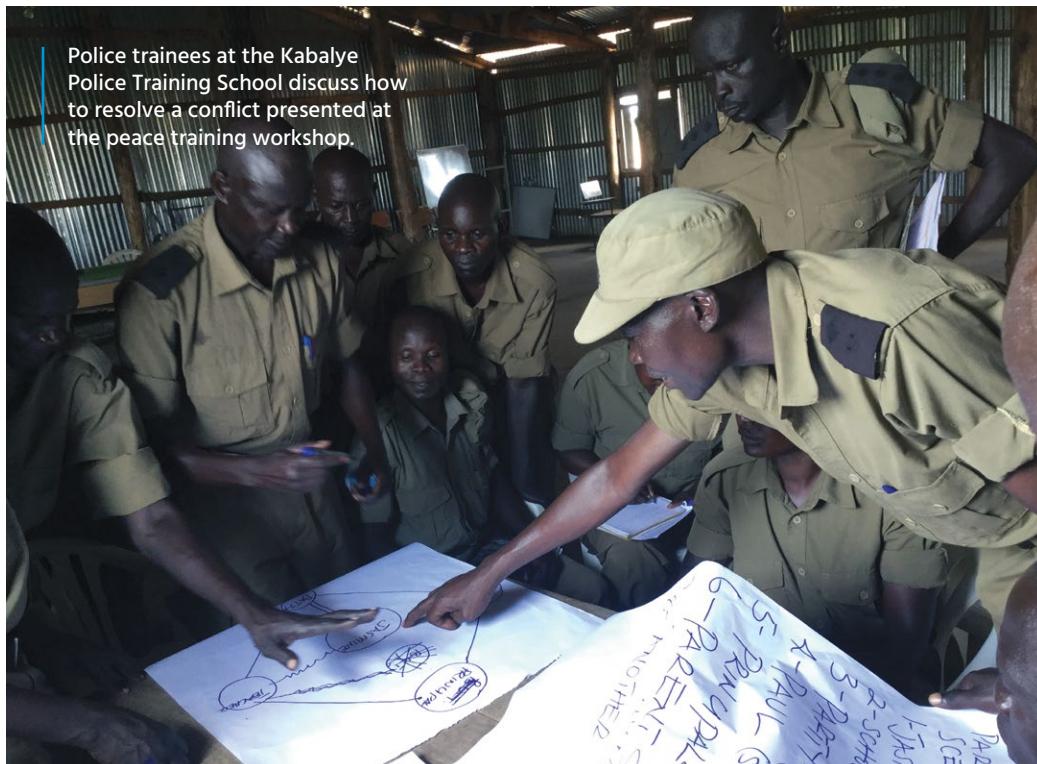
One evening after youth group, Lauren was speaking to their mother about the teaching which discussed the idea that baptism is a symbol of our commitment to Jesus. When Nadia overheard the conversation, she said, "Nadia...baptism!" Her mom said, "Nadia, you want to be baptized?" She flapped her arms (this is how she shows her excitement) and said, "Yes!" Her dad later asked her, "Nadia, do you want to get baptized?" Again, Nadia excitedly said, "Yes!"

This huge step in Nadia's journey of discipleship was made possible by the combined efforts of an incredible youth pastor, a welcoming community, and the helpful resource of a Jesus-centred curriculum. Ryan, together with some of her small group leaders, baptized Nadia in front of dozens of her peers and family members. Nadia was visibly excited to be baptized and it was obvious to all in attendance that she wants to follow Jesus. And, as a discipleship journey often goes, Nadia's next step inspired others. Nadia's baptism motivated her cousin and her sister to get baptized as well. In addition to that, our curriculum team was able to capture Nadia's baptism story and share it with kids and youth around the world. Her discipleship story will be able to inspire thousands on their own discipleship journeys.

# COMPASSION FUND



This fund allows us to **love** and serve others through radically and generously supporting our local and global compassion partners. It enables us to enter into relationship with people who are traditionally marginalized in our world, so that we can learn from and care for each other. Giving to Compassion is one way we embody Jesus' transformational message in our world.



## Peacemakers

**This past year** The Meeting House ran its first Peacemakers campaign in partnership with Mennonite Central Committee. Although it was our first campaign we collected over \$270,000 and 1,655 Relief Kits, surpassing both our goals. This meant we were able to partner financially with 62 MCC projects, including 3 restorative justice projects in Ontario, 38 peacebuilding projects in Sub-Saharan Africa, and 21 projects under our previous AIDS CARE commitment.

One of these peacebuilding initiatives is Africa Leadership and Reconciliation Ministries (ALARM) in Kampala, Uganda. Poor governance has led to a declining relationship between the police and the public in Kampala. Police officers and boda-boda taxi drivers sometimes feel ill-equipped

to deal with the challenges and conflicts they experience in their personal lives and sometime these conflicts lead to domestic violence, child neglect, and broken relationships. They transfer these frustrations from their homes to their workplaces, hindering their relationships with members of the public with whom they are in constant contact. ALARM helps strengthen this relationship by working with the police and the boda-boda motorcycle taxi operators through peace clubs.

This past year MCC & ALARM developed a peace curriculum to be used country-wide in training police officers. In March 2017, 67 police trainers and 106 police trainees at the Kabalye Police Training School covered four topics of the peace curriculum including conflict resolution, servant leadership, mediation, and restorative justice. Following this



Peace day at Loreto Schools in Rumbek, South Sudan.

training, one trainer noted, "The training was so well received...all new police officers will go through the curriculum as part of their training. It is so great to see how well ALARM has been received by the police especially in light of the suspicion and hesitation when this project started."

We were also able to partner with Loreto Schools in Rumbek, South Sudan. The peace club at Loreto Schools hosts an annual peace day filled with dancing and sports to promote peace and celebrate the country's independence. Club members are trained in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, and share what they've learned with other students and the community. Students are selected to participate in the club either because they have an interest in peacebuilding or because they've been involved in conflict. MCC also supports a meal program and farm at Loreto Schools to help keep children in school.

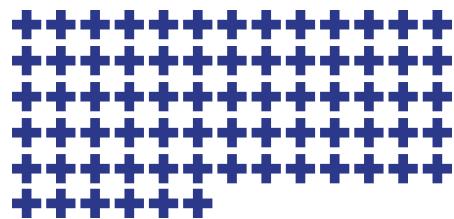
Josephine is a Peace Club member in Senior 4 who comes from a community with high rates of intercommunal violence and had limited exposure to processes of peacemaking. Because of support from MCC, she has participated in several peace club activities such as listening circles, peace day, little sister weekend, International Day of the Girl Child activities, visits to a local orphanage, school family lunch, a peace concert, and cultural presentations.

"Some sources of conflict/trauma in my community are disagreement and gossip. [Through participation in peace club activities] I have learned about forgiveness and how to release anger instead of keeping quiet – that I should find someone to talk to, how to deal with trauma and trauma healing. This term, someone hurt me and I called her to talk and we tried to understand [each other] and then things were good afterwards." – Josephine Nyanajong

photo: MCC photo/ Candacia Greeman



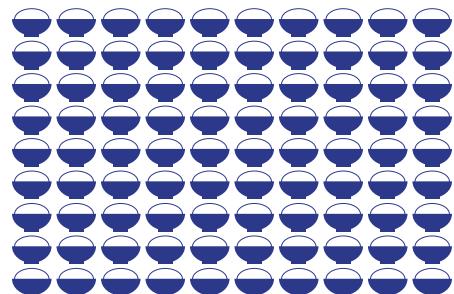
Ontario-based charities impacted through our **Local Compassion Agency Fund**



**6,620** people received humanitarian relief through The Meeting House's **Relief Kits** in Jordan & Ukraine

**\$887,636**  
given to MCC & World Vision programs internationally and in Ontario

 **62**  
partnered projects with MCC through the Peacemakers campaign



**900,000**  
people affected by famine in East Africa were provided with quality food through our contribution to World Vision

Selim (right) with our London pastor, Phil Prendergast.



## Selim's Story

**As a community,** The Meeting House London felt called to live simply, and committed to this in order to participate in addressing the growing need for refugee sponsorship. They took the responsibility to show hospitality seriously, and joined together to sponsor Selim as he transitioned to Canada from Baghdad, Iraq.

With the involvement of the London community, Selim was able to experience a fresh start in Canada, including completing a program at Fanshawe College and making the Dean's Honour List. Selim has been in Canada for over a year, and as

he reflects on his first year in Canada, he shares how he was welcomed not as "a compassion project," but as family. Arriving in Canada, Selim was surrounded by strangers, but now is so grateful that those strangers have become his Canadian family, and for their investment in his life and his story.

Although the formal sponsorship is finished, Selim is deeply committed to giving back by participating in family life at The Meeting House. He is a significant and actively engaged member of the The Meeting House London. He serves on the welcome team, setup team, is a part of home church, and is now on the lead sponsorship team supporting the arrival of a second refugee family.



## Raw Hope

In June 2017, we donated \$150,000 to Raw Hope, an initiative of our partner World Vision Canada, which provided humanitarian relief to children and families affected by the famine in East Africa. One of the lives touched by our support was Akusi from Kenya who received life saving food supplements formulated just for young children. Thank you for your generous giving to the Compassion Fund that helped make this possible.

“Follow me, and I  
will send you out  
to fish for people”

Matthew 4:19



# GROWTH FUND



This fund helps more people **learn** the irreligious message of Jesus as we expand the reach of our ministries. Giving to the growth fund provides the capital and start-up funds required to launch and expand our sites, allows us to create disciple-making tools to resource our community, and supports the ongoing development of our own curriculum for kids and youth.

ongoing mental health challenges make it difficult for her to maintain relationships, engage consistently with community, and see God at work in her life. She has bad days, too.

Shortly after coming on Sunday for the first time, Christina came to home church. She commented on how she immediately felt so loved and welcomed, and deeply appreciated the sense of family and community – just what she had been so desperately looking for. She warmly reflects on brunches, dinners, and Thanksgiving celebrations she shared with friends she made in home church in the last year. Christina loves to write, and even wrote a story about one of her memorable home church family experiences.

**...she immediately felt so loved and welcomed, and deeply appreciated the sense of family and community – just what she had been so desperately looking for.**



## Christina's Story

In **September of 2016**, the Meeting House East Toronto opened its doors at the Beach Cinemas and at several home church locations throughout the east end. Not long after that, we met a new friend – Christina.

Christina is a wonderful spirit. On a good day, she is full of life, smiling, sure to be found sharing stories and warm embraces with those around her. But, like all of us, she has her struggles. She openly shares how pain from her past and

Even with these warm memories, things haven't been easy for her. Another important source of community in the city for Christina closed down this summer, and she worries about the impact this will have on her life. Her health makes it difficult for her to stay connected to our church community, and her home church friends aren't always sure how to best support and encourage her.

Christina's story isn't finished yet, but because we are here in the east end of Toronto, we can continue the journey with her. Through home church, Christina is challenged and encouraged to grow spiritually, to remember that God is listening to, and answering, her prayers for community and family. She has a place that welcomes her and wants to support her just as she is, and provides a space for her to experience authentic, Christ centered community on the good days, and bad days.



We celebrated the completion of our first full year of curriculum for all ages



churches in 11 different countries signed up to use our materials



Thanks to feedback from our youth leaders and pastors, we piloted a new approach to Sr. High midweek, designed to resemble the home church experience

### We're looking forward to:

- Launching of our new curriculum website
- Launching our new Sr. High approach across all midweeks this fall
- Developing our own music component for preschoolers



Mikayla shares with her small group leader on Sunday morning.

### Mikayla's Story

**Our curriculum team** has been working hard this year to complete our first full year of curriculum for all our kids and youth. Our writing and video teams have put in countless hours to produce 332 lesson plans and over 100 videos to equip our volunteers as they lead our kids and youth in Sunday and midweek small groups. In addition, more than 250 churches in 11 countries signed up to use our materials, many of which would not otherwise be able to afford curriculum resources for their programs.

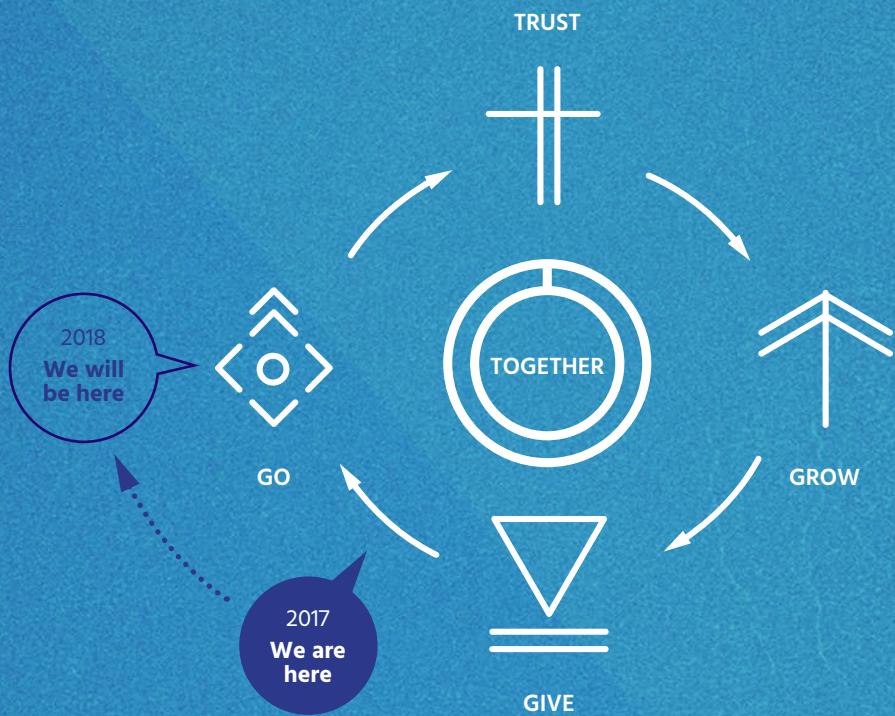
Mikayla and her sister, Addison, love being a part of the church and are regular attenders in their Kidmax small groups. Their parents have been active at The Meeting House Hamilton Mountain, and as a family they talk about the many things they learn at church on Sunday morning. Together they actively try to follow Jesus in their everyday lives.

When Mikayla was in grade two, a girl at school began to pick on her. Like many good parents before them, her mom and dad told her to try to steer clear of the girl and move on. But Mikayla couldn't do that. Mikayla recently learned in Kidmax that Jesus wants us to love our enemies, so instead of just avoiding her, she decided that she wanted to befriend the girl who was bullying her.

To do that, Mikayla had a plan. She asked her mom if she could bring her Bible to school. Her mom admits she was pretty surprised by the question since the girls attend a public school. She agreed though and Mikayla took her Bible to school. Her plan was to invite the girl who was bullying her to read the Bible with her, show her what Jesus said in the Gospels, and introduce her to Jesus.

And so, grade two Mikayla sat in the corner of her classroom with the other girl and read to her about Jesus. Her teacher was amazed. Her parents were amazed. Mikayla had done exactly what Jesus calls us to do, and what she learned through our curriculum: to love her enemy.

# DISCIPLESHIP MODEL



## Trust

We demonstrate our trust in Christ through baptism. This journey is not just a one-time deal, it's a daily choice to trust Jesus to lead our lives.

## Grow

When we choose to trust in Jesus, we want to learn from one another and live out what he taught us.

## Give

As we learn how to follow Jesus, we begin to give back, teach others, and serve communities.

## Go

True discipleship requires us to look outside of ourselves and help others become disciples of Jesus.

## Together

As we grow, we develop deeper relationships with others and with God. Personal spirituality is not enough. We need each other.

# THREE FUNDS

Our finances are organized into three funds: the General Fund, the Compassion Fund, and the Growth Fund. Giving generously to these funds means that we can spread the irreligious message of Jesus as a community. When you give, you aren't just giving to The Meeting House, you are fueling the great commission. We prioritize discipleship, learning how to follow Jesus as his disciples and helping other people to learn the irreligious message of Jesus. Thank you for being a part of a community that continues to challenge ourselves to live simply so that we can give generously.



## General Fund

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## Compassion Fund

This fund allows us to **love** and serve others through radically and generously supporting our local and global compassion partners. It enables us to enter into relationship with people who are traditionally marginalized in our world, so that we can learn from and care for each other. The Compassion Fund is how we practically strive to see Jesus's transformational message in our world.



## Growth Fund

This fund helps more people **learn** the irreligious message of Jesus as we expand the reach of our ministries. Giving to the growth fund provides the capital and start-up funds required to launch and expand our sites, allows us to create disciple-making tools to resource our community, and supports the ongoing development of our own teaching content for kids and youth.

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



To view our complete 2017 Annual Report, Financial Audit, and Proxy Ballot go to  
**[themeetinghouse.com/annualreport](http://themeetinghouse.com/annualreport)**