

2016

ANNUAL REPORT

**the meeting
house**
a church for people who aren't into church



DAVID LEES
Chair, Overseers

As I reflect on this last year, I thank God for the opportunity to be part of The Meeting House family with you. Hebrews 3:11 tells us that being a part of God's family also means that Jesus calls you his brother or sister. How is that for Good News?

As a spiritual family, 1 Peter 3:8 exhorts us to be of one mind, to sympathize with each other, and to love each other as brothers and sisters. Even through challenges, our church family demonstrates God's provision through our continued growth and outreach, increasing discipleship, and practical love for each other. This year, I am particularly thankful for tremendous relevant teaching for all ages; Bruxy's leadership through spiritual and practical matters; a continued emphasis on discipleship, successful Regional Town Hall meetings; financial generosity allowing for additional compassion efforts; the East Toronto site launch; and our 30th birthday as a church community.

As Overseers, we appreciate our enthusiastic, generous community who enable our family to love each other and proclaim the gospel. Thank you to the volunteers, staff, and those who provide support through prayer and finances. Praise God for all He has given us, including his Son Jesus who calls us brother and sister.

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



BRUXY CAVEY
Teaching Pastor

We're in a good place! Our attendance, finances, and emotions – as a whole, The Meeting House is in a good place. And even better than that, we're part of, and ambassadors for, the **Jesus Nation!** That's the best "place" of all.

There is a condensed version of the gospel that says: Jesus died on the cross for our sins so that we can be forgiven and go to heaven when we die. Sure, that's good news, but only part of it. The gospel of the kingdom, of the **Jesus Nation**, anchors our spirituality in this world, reminding us that Jesus doesn't just prepare us for heaven when we die but shows us how to live like Jesus as world-changers now. As I heard Dallas Willard say in an interview, "The gospel is less about how to get into the Kingdom of Heaven after you die, and more about how to live in the Kingdom of Heaven before you die." Amen!

Do you remember the reaction of Thomas when he saw the resurrected Jesus? "My Lord and my God!" Along with all our fellow Christ-followers around the world, we want to worship Jesus as our "God." More than that, we also want to follow Jesus here and now as our "Lord" and help as many people as possible catch a vision for living in the kingdom of God now.

Thank you for being an active part of this local embassy of the Jesus Nation!

Peace,

A handwritten signature in blue 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 our ministry. The majority of our income (94%) comes from individual donors, with the remainder coming from building rentals and 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.

In the year ending 2016, spending in the General Fund was below budget, primarily due to open staff positions. This resulted in a surplus of \$400,000 which allowed us to transfer funds to specific areas of need. We transferred \$100,000 to the Growth Fund to help meet the fund's income target. \$130,000 was transferred to the Property fund to support the replacement of aging equipment and vehicles as well as to pay for major building repairs. The balance was left in the General Fund to be spent in the 2017 budget. The Compassion Fund was well supported, allowing us to distribute over \$1.4 million to many compassion agencies and refugee sponsorships.

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 opportunity 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 towards simplicity, stewarding your financial gifts thoughtfully and responsibly. We are glad you are with us!

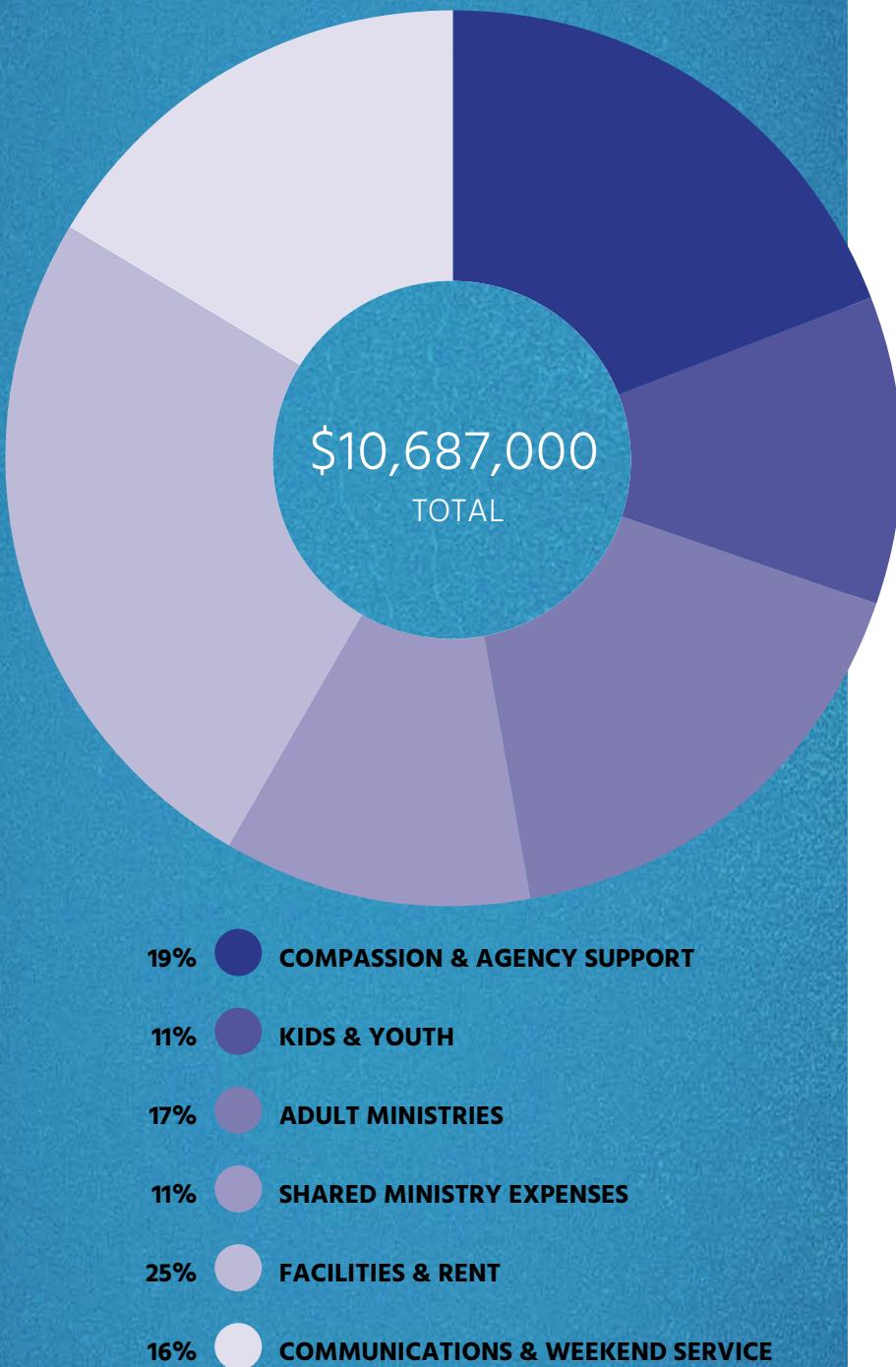


Judy Maranta, CPA, CMA
Finance Manager



Mathew Moore, CPA, CA
Treasurer

THREE FUNDS CONSOLIDATED



The above represents the consolidation of all three funds, General, Compassion, and Growth, throughout the 2015–2016 fiscal year*

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 38 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. Funds for benevolence within our church community, supporting staff, and site-directed compassion initiatives are 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, program budgets, classroom supplies, and subsidies for our twice-annual youth retreats.

ADULT MINISTRIES

Sunday services and Home Church together form the foundation of our Adult Ministries. It's the 2-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 and The Attic, training and appreciation for our amazing volunteers, as well as resourcing and salaries for our Lead Pastors.

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 our IT, Accounting, and HR staff, as well as funds for resourcing, training, and appreciating our staff.

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 \$400,000 in income after expenses. This category includes utilities, maintenance, and facilities staff.

COMMUNICATIONS & WEEKEND SERVICE

This category includes teaching costs for all age groups – both staff and equipment – to produce and distribute Sunday's message and our own kids and youth curriculum for Preschool to Grade 12. This category also pays for our trucks, trailers, and equipment for all ministry areas and the cross-regional staff that support them, including tech, logistics, and communications.



Teresa Howe and Jimmy
Rushton,
Downtown
Hamilton Site

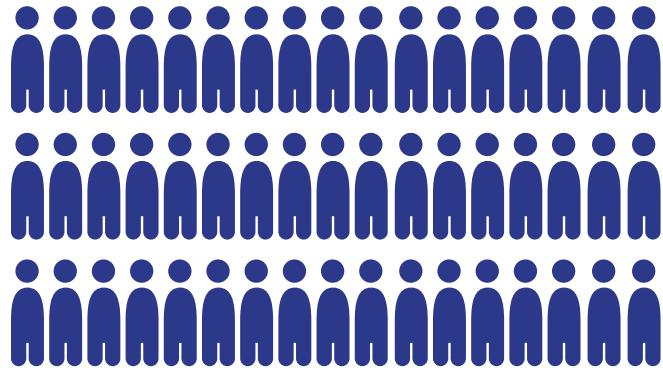


GENERAL FUND

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.

5,124

average Sunday
morning
attendance



92



Baptisms in our last
Ministry year

Teresa's Baptism

Teresa Howe is a member of our community at the Downtown Hamilton site. She has served Jesus in many ways – even spending significant time in the mission field.

At one point, Teresa had decided to serve Muslim families in Central Asia, sharing the message of Jesus with them in hope that they too would become Christ followers. Whenever a Muslim would choose to surrender their life to Jesus, they would publicly display their decision through baptism. For many, the choice to follow Jesus would come with great sacrifice as it meant losing family, losing friends, and even putting their own lives at risk.

Teresa began to wonder if she too needed the courage to get baptized as a believer. Even as she taught others to put Jesus first, she was choosing not to get baptized for fear of what her family might think.

With the support of her com-



With the support
of her Downtown
Hamilton community,
Teresa made the
decision to step
out in faith and be
baptized

munity in Downtown Hamilton, Teresa made the decision to step out in faith and be baptized, publicly declaring her choice to follow Jesus as an adult.

Thanks to our General Fund, we are able to keep all our sites running so that people like Teresa can engage in life-changing discipleship.



Cody and Andrea Buchenauer,
Kitchener Site

HOME CHURCH

Cody Buchenauer and his wife Andrea began attending The Meeting House in Kitchener in 2015. They had heard their friends and family talk about The Meeting House and wanted to check it out. After attending for only a few weeks, they knew this was going to be their new church family and they wanted to get plugged in. Cody began service on the setup team and the offering count team. His leadership skills and humble attitude stood out to Kitchener lead pastor Phil Shamas, who approached Cody about leading a Home Church.

The smaller and more intimate community of Home Church was exactly what Cody and Andrea were looking for. They wanted to cultivate deeper spiritual growth and build relationships with others. In the Spring of 2016, Phil and Cody launched Brigadoon Home Church. Since then, each Thursday night became an opportunity to gather in community



Average Home
Church attendance

1,389



646

kidmax visitors



3,580

committed volunteers



527

Youth and leaders
registered for the
ALV Spring Retreat

*These stats are representative of all of
our sites together

** These stats are representative of the
2015–2016 Ministry year

and form stronger relationships. As Brigadoon dives into another year of learning together, Cody feels a deep sense of gratitude for this amazing group of people and the community they are building. His favourite thing about Home Church is the opportunity to connect with new people and build relationships that foster mutual spiritual growth.

Cody was baptized this summer and continues to invest in the members of his Home Church. Brigadoon Home Church is thriving and growing under his gentle leadership. When we submit to what God is calling us to do beautiful things happen. Thank you for giving to our General Fund which helps support things like Home Church where relationships and spiritual growth happen.

Cody's
favourite
thing about
Home Church
is the
opportunity
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people



Phil Shamas and Cody
Buchenauer, Kitchener Site



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 how we practically strive to embody Jesus' transformational message in our world.

Local Compassion

Shared Beginnings is a literacy program where members of our London community regularly volunteer. It's run by LUSO Community services, one of the recipients of a Community Building 'peace' grant The Meeting House disbursed in June 2015. Maria and Maya attended Shared Beginnings for the first time in early April. Even though Maria didn't speak any English and Maya was extremely shy they found themselves attending weekly, and Maya began to show increased self-confidence. Through this she has been able to build important friendships and develop her understanding of the English language. She frequently repeats phrases the staff and volunteers use during activities and knows the other children by name. When



you give to the Compassion Fund you support programs like Shared Beginnings that intentionally welcome those of diverse cultural backgrounds, reaching the marginalized and vulnerable in our own communities. People like Maya and Maria.

Global Compassion

Due to your faithful and generous giving The Meeting House was in a position to respond to a variety of devastating crises beyond what we had planned— both at home and around the world.

In September 2001 conflict primarily over land between indigenous Christians and settler Muslims resulted in the death of 900 people in Jos, Nigeria. Amina Ahmed, a young Muslim woman, found herself in the midst of the riots. She lost her brother, much of her family's property, and was convinced that revenge was the only effective response. Fearing that the Christian agenda was to destroy the Muslim culture altogether, Amina joined an armed group whose purpose was to attack Christians.

In 2003, through her father's encouragement, Amina attended an MCC (Mennonite Central Committee) workshop on conflict transformation. This workshop taught her that that nonviolence and conflict transformation are powerful tools for reconciliation. She learned that religious differences weren't the root of the problem and that Christians are not intent on harming Muslims. Now, Amina is the director of a women's peace organization where she leads nonviolence training in Nigeria. The Compassion Fund supports programs like these through our partnership with MCC. Some of the peace education programs we've supported over the past years include similar peace clubs in Southern Africa. In places with deep need for conflict prevention, reconciliation, and trauma healing. MCC resources people like Amina to become leaders in peace advocacy.

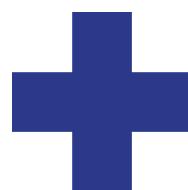


charities impacted
through our
support of **The
Local Compassion
Agency Fund.**

Our partnership
with MCC
provided essential
support to

304,174

people affected
by low-profile
disasters.



Supported our
community
members as they
helped resettle

15 refugee
families
to Canada.

Phoebe, Andre, Danielle, and
Noah Parris, East Toronto Site



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.

474

Seats added by launching our Downtown Hamilton and East Toronto sites



Total population within a 15km radius of our Downtown Hamilton and East Toronto sites

376

Number of Kids & Youth plans created by our Curriculum team*

*2015–2016 Ministry year

East Toronto Site Launch

Families from our Downtown Toronto site began planning for a new location closer to the East Toronto area in March 2015. In 2016 we became the proud parents of The Meeting House East Toronto, our eighteenth site. Our staff team grew as Andre Parris, lead pastor of East Toronto, joined our family. On September 18 families flocked in with their children, excited to experience a morning of fellowship with their neighbours and friends, and eager to continue learning together throughout the week in Home Churches. The new site provides our Downtown Toronto community with the opportunity to invite the people closest to them to experience God in their own neighbourhood.

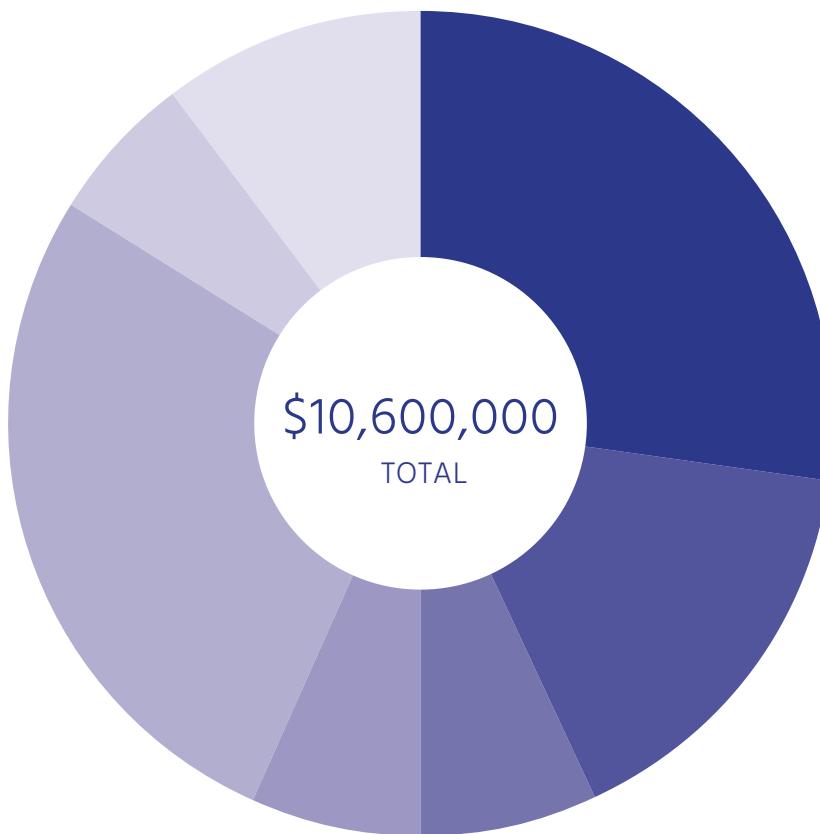
Eighteen sites! That's eighteen locations growing Jesus-centred communities by sharing his message. The Growth Fund resources new and growing faith-communities that result in more sites and more people learning about Jesus.

Curriculum Impact

The Curriculum Team officially launched their original curriculum for kids and youth in March 2016. In May, their series on following Jesus included a week that highlighted baptism. When Rebecca asked her daughter Jane what she learned in youth on that Sunday morning, Jane mentioned that they talked about baptism. Rebecca prompted her for more information and Jane explained that she learned that baptism is how we tell others we want to follow Jesus forever. When Rebecca asked Jane whether that was something she was interested in she enthusiastically replied, "Yes!" On the day of her baptism, Jane's youth small group leaders and her friends from church and school – those who don't yet know Jesus – all came to cheer her on. She was baptized by Amy, her mom's Home Church elder and a dear friend of the family since Jane's birth. The Growth Fund has made it possible for us to create Curriculum that encourages our kids and youth to respond to Jesus' message in tangible ways.



A LOOK BACK AT MISSION TRANSFORM



This summer marked the close of our four-year, \$10,000,000, Mission Transform campaign. During this campaign, we were challenged to give radically and generously above our normal giving amounts in order to reach our local and global communities in new ways. Because of your financial commitment throughout the campaign, we launched four new sites, expanded the Oakville Production Site, and created our own Kids & Youth Teaching, now available to churches around the world. We challenged ourselves to invite 100,000 people to hear the irreligious message of Jesus with the help of books, handouts, t-shirts, and teaching series geared toward evangelism.

In the area of Compassion, we gave over \$1 million dollars to 67 local agencies connected to our sites. Your generosity has supported shelters, educational programs, food and nutrition programs, transitional housing and many more causes benefitting groups such as refugees, new Canadians, inner-city youth, First Nations communities, and seniors. We supported the global church through BIC Canada as they share the gospel and meet needs in their partnered communities around the world. Over \$1.4 million went to MCC's AIDS CARE programs in Southern Africa. Through our partnership with World Vision, the children of Mposa and Chamba received better education, farmers received livestock and tools, families gained valuable nutrition knowledge, and communities learned about rights and protection. On top of all that, you sponsored over 2,000 children through World Vision. Thank you for your faithful and generous giving!

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 learn the irreligious message of Jesus. Thank you for being a part of a community that wants to continue to challenge ourselves on what it means to live simply so that we can give generously.



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Growth Fund

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For more information on how to give visit
themeetinghouse.com/give

"There is neither Jew nor Gentile,
neither slave nor free, nor is there
male and female, for
you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Galatians 3:28 (NIV)

the meeting
house

To view our complete 2016 Annual Report, Financial Audit, and Proxy Ballot go to
themeetinghouse.com/annualreport