



GOHOP

annual
general
report

• 2018 •



Greetings from Hamilton!

When planting a tree from a nursery, water is the needed thing... lots and lots of water. First you dig a big hole. Then you carefully guide the new tree into the hole. After the tree is centred and lowered to a proper grade you begin to fill in the hole, packing the soil often to ensure there are no air pockets. And then you pour on the water, lots and lots of water. And you water, not from large buckets which spill in every direction, but with a steady trickle from a garden hose over a long period of time. Yes, water is the thing.

If 2017 was a year of transition, 2018 was a year of settling. Jill Weber, the director and cofounder of GOHOP (with her husband, Kirk), was transplanted from Hamilton into new soil in Gilford, England. Another tree was relocated in the garden that is GOHOP (and, it needs saying, another tree added. Margie Stuart, a delightful addition to our team, came on to our staff midway through the year). I, Andy, was moved from my comfy little spot to fill the large, gaping hole left by Jill. GOHOP, then, being an ecosystem, has been in a season of adaptation, of settling.

Settling doesn't sound very exciting. Growth is the thing we prize in our culture; we want growth, growth and more growth. Anything that isn't growing in today's economy is almost certainly doomed to failure.

However - thanks be to God! - in the economy of the Kingdom of God, this is not how it works. Not only is a season of settling ok in the Kingdom, it is necessary. A tree that is not established in those first few, days, weeks and months will not thrive in the long-term, nor perhaps even survive. And everyone in horticulture knows that there are seasons - seasons of planting and reaping and seasons of rest and dormancy.

2018 was not a year of growth for GOHOP, but a season of settling. No new programs were launched. No new horizons were reached. It was perhaps even a bit humdrum, a steady plowing and tilling in the ways we've always done. TrueCity 24-7 prayer went on, as usual. Prayer Truck went on, as usual. The 541 prayer room went on, as usual. The internship went on (albeit with a new leader, Diane), as usual. Guests from 24-7 Prayer visited our community, as usual. Various staff lead workshops, taught from pulpits and traveled about equipping, resourcing and catalyzing prayer and discipleship, as usual. GOHOP pressed on, as usual. In it all, God was with us, as usual.

As with planting a new tree, so it is with GOHOP. Both need lots of water. And GOHOP has been well-watered with prayer. Prayer has not stopped and God has not abandoned this garden. So we've been settling. Settling quite nicely, I'd say.

Andy Groen, Director (April 2019)

Spiritual Direction

Doug Horst

What is spiritual direction?

It is the ministry of companioning with another person to help him or her become more fully present to God. The goal of spiritual direction is long-term spiritual growth and maturity in one's relationship with the God the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit. Spiritual direction creates space for people to process their spiritual journey, discern the work of God in their life, work through ongoing spiritual struggles, expand their prayer language, practice spiritual disciplines and receive spiritual healing.

At GOHOP each staff member is encouraged to meet regularly with a spiritual director. Each intern is also required to receive spiritual direction

once a month for the duration of the 9-month internship program. The interns often give feedback that their spiritual direction experience was the most helpful, life-giving component of the internship. In 2018, seven different spiritual directors (GOHOP and non-GOHOP) collaborated to provide spiritual direction for the interns. Presently there are five spiritual directors listed on the GOHOP website (<https://www.gohop.ca/spiritual-directors>) available for anyone who is interested in receiving spiritual direction.

Two of the GOHOP staff, Doug and Andy, served as spiritual directors at the All Ontario Youth Convention (AOYC), a May weekend-long youth conference at Sir Wilfrid Laurier University that attracts almost 1,000 youth.

Soul Sisters/ Brothers

Nina Schuurman-Drenth

Soul Sisters/ Brothers is group spiritual direction and leadership development for women or men of influence in the Hamilton area. A brainchild of GOHOP's founder, Jill Weber, this cohort gathers monthly to share meals and go through the book *Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership* by Ruth Haley Barton. In addition, the cohorts gather together for a silent retreat day.

In 2018, a new compacted 8-month (student-friendly) cohort was spearheaded by Nina for young adult women, most of which were students. This group, which began in September 2018, has come to deeply value each other's company as they navigate their personal leadership journeys.

A Soul Brothers spiritual direction group for men met monthly (except for the summer) in 2018 to strengthen souls and leadership. In their final time together, they prayed for each other to re-envision the promised land, a loving union with God, lifting each other up to God, knowing that our relationship with God and each other was strengthened and much more joyful than when we started to meet in 2017.

Soul Sisters/ Brothers provides a framework of understanding as to how God shapes leaders from the inside out. The format of fellowship around food, silence, and sharing creates space for God to meet, shape and form participants in His presence as leaders.

True City Prayer Room 2018

Shira Gamey

Every March we partner with True City and run two weeks of 24-7 Prayer. In 2018 our theme verse was “Be Still and Know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). This verse in Psalms is found in the context of a world of chaos and trouble; it is an invitation to be still in a chaotic world. Springing off of the whole Psalm, our heart was that in the midst of the worlds chaos, we would create a space of hospitality and rest for those who were weary.

As we put the space together, past staff member Hannah did a beautiful job of coordinating the creative team, and managing the week of set up. Margie Stuart stepped into the new role of putting the prayer schedule

together, making sure we had people praying in the space around the clock. L’arche (a community of individuals with and without developmental disabilities) and Re-create (a downtown drop-in art studio for vulnerable youth) outfitted our cafe with their art. Burn 24-7 Hamilton hosted about 30 hours of continuous worship. Through the Burn, multiple churches were given space to lead us in worship through music.

They say many hands makes light work, but I also say many hands working together in unity also brings great joy. It was a sheer delight to see the diverse individuals and groups bringing their offering to create a space of rest and encounter in God’s presences.



Photos from TrueCity Prayer Room 2018.



Missional Partnerships

Philomene Serrao

At GOHOP we also partner other ministries. Living Rock which seeks to support at-risk youth, is one such place. For the past eight years or so we have regularly partaken of 'The Gathering' on Wednesdays, where they put on a free lunch for the youth, followed by worship and some teaching. After the service we interact with the youth and pray for them if they so desire. We then hold a prayer meeting, where we pray for the youth and all the challenges they face in this day and age. This relationship has been beneficial for both parties. In the summer when we have the Prayer Truck, the youth and staff at Living Rock partake in it. We are thankful for their support.



Left: The Gathering at The Living Rock, at which GOHOP prays for the youth who attend.

541 Eatery & Exchange and The Meeting Place Church is another ministry we partner with. Some of our staff volunteer at the cafe, whilst others partake in the weekly meetings on Sundays. They help with preparation of the food and clean up, child care and worship. Some of the regulars meet on Mondays for a bible-study. We also have our prayer room in the basement of the cafe, where we regularly pray for the staff and their very, diverse clientele. A group of teens also meets in the prayer room. for bible study. We are blessed to offer our support in this manner. This has been a very symbiotic relationship.



Right: A weekly bible study hosted by Shira Gamey for the regulars at 541 Eatery & Exchange.

YWAM Embrace

Margie Stuart

For many years, GOHOP has had a connection with Youth With A Mission in its local form. We share a common love of prioritizing prayer, pursuing mission, providing hospitality, and seeking God's heart for justice. Several GOHOP staff members have been involved with YWAM in various ways in the past.

Hamilton and surrounding region has a large group of alumni from YWAM bases around the world, some straight from finishing their Discipleship Training School, others from different leadership positions. A number of us have been working to gather alumni together. After much prayer, we have discerned presently that God desires us to meet, to create a sense of family and provide times and ways for the members of the family to care for each other's needs. Also to worship together and create opportunities to serve Hamilton.

To that purpose, our YWAM alumni have sought to walk out what God has shown us. Weekly, we pray corporately for YWAM on Friday mornings at the GOHOP prayer room. We have gathered together irregularly for meals, for parties, and for worship events. We also studied the book *Dirty Glory* by Pete Greig of 24/7 International. We held a family event, one lovely Sunday afternoon, which included meals, games, an opportunity to serve by helping The Giving Closet thrift shop prepare its space for opening, and of course, worship. We are still seeking to bring members of greater Hamilton's alumni into family, and to discover more of what God's plans are for this group.

For further information regarding YWAM group or events, contact Margie Stuart, margiespearl@gmail.com.

Equipping the Saints

Philomene Serrao

At GOHOP we seek to equip the larger body of Christ, so besides the various activities we host, our staff are also involved in training and educating others in prayer, mission and justice. We want to inspire others and help them grow. We are all called to be God's instrument in reaching and discipling others. We are all endowed with various gifts and talents and God uses each one of us in different areas. Some such topics: intimacy with God, hospitality, prayer (Ignatian or examen, or breath prayer), silence and solitude, spiritual disciplines, spiritual direction, spiritual discernment etc.

The Lord has opened doors for some of us to travel far and wide. Abraham M. has travelled to Germany, France and Switzerland teaching and training others. Peter G. has been called to preach at St Paul's United Church and the Commons. He also coordinates and oversees the Order of the Mustard Seed. Nina D. has preached at New Hope Church,

prayer leads at the Hamilton Youth Retreat and the prayer walk for the International Association of Refugees. Doug H. and Andy G. both served at the All Ontario Youth Convention, where they set up a prayer room and were part of a prayer team and also lead Spiritual Direction. Doug H. has led a Lenten Contemplative Prayer Group at Crown Point Church and also participated in launching the Giving Closet thrift shop, a ministry to the lower city. Shira G. is on the leadership team at the Meeting Place Church. Together with Margie S. she leads a weekly bible study on learning to hear God. Margie S. together with her husband is part of a healing ministry team. Phyllis S. is an 'Anna' in the house of prayer. She is also part of a team that prays for Waterdown and the persecuted Church and prays for her elderly clients at 'meal on wheels'.

These are some of the ways in which we are expanding the 'kingdom of God' in our neighbourhood and reaching out into the world.

Phoebe Palmer Breakfast

Nina Schuurman-Drenth

Phoebe Palmer was an American preacher in the 1800s who, after preaching all over Ontario in the autumn of 1857, was caught in a freak snowstorm and forced to stay in Hamilton. It was in Hamilton that she was requested to lead a prayer service. Twenty-one folks prayed with Phoebe, and something shifted in the room; they experienced transformation. Phoebe then chose to stay in Hamilton for one week, hosting evening prayer every night. Over 400 people – including many politicians and even the mayor – joined her for prayer and were changed.

These folks who were changed by Phoebe's prayer nights could not keep what they had received to themselves. They traveled all over, teaching what they learned as they went. Church historians remember this series of events as the Second Great Awakening of the Protestant church, and it's a little known fact that it all began here in our hometown of Hamilton with one woman who chose to say 'yes' to the Spirit's prompting.



Left: 2018's three honourees / Right: attendees enjoying breakfast.

This is what we celebrate every year at our Phoebe Palmer Breakfast Fundraiser and this is what our honourees spoke about at 2018's Breakfast: the way they faithfully said 'yes' to whatever it was the Lord was guiding them to, no matter how grand or how menial.

Brittani Farrington spoke about how her small 'yes' to providing a ride for a newcomer family lead to one day becoming Director of Karem Kitchen. Emma Cubitt spoke about how her and her husband's dream of a grocery coop in Hamilton lead them to knowing it had to be them who said 'yes' to starting one. Sue Carr spoke about how her passion for finding a space for her small street-level congregation lead to saying a brave 'yes' to joining in on the project that later became 541 Eatery & Exchange.

We are grateful for all the living examples of faithfulness in leadership we see in our city. Thank you, Brittani, Emma, and Sue for showing us what it looks like to be Jesus-following leaders in our city.



Moving Mountains

Marc Daffern

Moving Mountains continues to meet every Wednesday faithfully. During 2018, we remember some awesome things that have happened. Marc Daffern was commissioned into leadership. We prayed for Pr. Abraham as he went overseas in Germany, Switzerland and France, proclaiming the gospel and meeting his son for the first time after five years.

GOHOP prayed for him as well as The Meeting Place church, and New Hope Church. We prayed together, received deliverance from various things. We've witnessed miracles in our bodies, the weather, and in circumstances. God continues to move mountains within our group, and we are very excited for the new things on the horizon for 2019 and beyond!



Photo: Abraham and Paul, two dedicated MM pray-ers.

Order of the Mustard Seed (OMS)

Peter Giokas

The OMS is a lay-led, mixed-gender, globally-dispersed, ecumenical, official religious order established by the 24-7 Prayer movement. Jill Weber is the Global Convenor (head of the OMS) and Peter Giokas is the Candidate Overseer responsible for the process of people becoming members. The vows of the OMS are: to be True to Christ (Great Commandment), to Be Kind to People (Great Commandment), and to Take the Gospel to the Nations (Great Commission.) The six associated practices which help outwork these vows are Prayer, Creativity, Hospitality, Justice, Mission and Learning. Each member develops their own plan for how they will live into these vows and practices in their context and calling.

In October of 2018 Hamilton hosted the first Great Lakes Regional OMS Vow Ceremony. At that service were 6 candidates from Hamilton who

had completed their year of discernment and preparation to become members. They made their vows in the company of many of the Hamilton OMS members. We had a grand celebration of this event with a potluck feast following. To date Hamilton has one of, if not the actual largest, cluster of members in a geographic area globally. Given the number of members in this area we began meeting formally through the year to discern God's design for this growing body of vowed members and how he desires us to contribute to both our local churches and the city as a whole.

We expect that each year a few more people in this area will join the Order and we look forward to seeing how this Hamilton cluster will develop in the next many years.

24-7 Connections

Shira Gamey

At GOHOP, among some of the core values we hold and seek to carry out as a community is the practice of hospitality and pilgrimage. Basically we find there is such great value, not only in receiving people into our doors, but also in making time to go visit other prayer communities. As we go, we open ourselves to hear stories of how and where God is at work outside our normal context and be inspired.

In May last year, Jill, Phylis and Shira had the opportunity to attend a Canadian prayer summit in Sherbrooke, Quebec. Leaders of houses of prayer from across Canada came to connect, worship and grow together. It was encouraging to meet so many new faces and hear how the prayer movement across Canada is so much bigger than I realized.

In August, Dave Arnold, Sue Carr, and Shira joined a 24-7 prayer leaders conference in Tulsa. Again, a bulk of our time was given to hear big each other's stories and struggles. It's a wonder how deeply good it is to share one another's struggles and know you are not alone in the journey.

Instead we were reminded there are numerous prayer communities scattered across all of North America all doing the hard work of cultivating prayer in their cities.

In November, the GOHOP leadership team took 4 days to go down to Charlotte, North Carolina to visit the house of prayer run by our friend Lisa Koons. Lisa has put together one of the most beautiful and engaging prayer spaces we had ever seen. To say it was inspiring would be an understatement. The call on GOHOP to serve and bless the city of Hamilton is different than Lisa's in Charlotte; however we came back dreaming in a fresh way. Some of the beginnings of these dreams were experienced in the 2019 True City Prayer Room, but I feel there is much more to come.

Each trip brought its own word of encouragement and we look forward to seeing how God continues to grow the seeds that were planted as we made space to step beyond our doors.

541 Prayer Room 2018

Shira Gamey

This year, the 541 prayer room has been a beautiful year of deepening community. Over the last number of years, GOHOP has slowly been adding prayer rhythms throughout our week into which we have then been able to invite the wider Hamilton community. As we have faithfully held the space week after week, month after month, and year after year, the depth of relationship in the room continues to grow. In a world where the cultural priority is individuality, I see the space at 541 creating a

counter culture of community and doing things like prayer together. It's nice to know we are not carrying our burdens alone. Instead, we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. Many of which are in our city. If you'd like to join us as we pray, we would be more than happy to welcome you in. For the most up to date schedule check out our website at gohop.ca.

Studies in New Monasticism Internship

Rev Diane Albert

The Internship is an integral part of GOHOP and it has been my privilege to give leadership to it this year.

The first contact I make with Interns is the interview. I believe this is where the Internship truly begins. This is a highlight for me because this is where I hear Interns' stories and start to get to know them as they share their hearts and their reasons for wanting to take part. It was clear to me that God had issued a beautiful invitation to which people were responding. As the Director it has been such a privilege to watch the unfolding of those initial desires throughout the months of the programme.

A common thread I noticed among the Interns was the longing to go deeper and to develop some consistent rhythms in their lives.

A highlight for many Interns were the various prayer sets they were exposed to and participated in, such as Taize (a repetitive singing of simple harmonized tunes interspersed with readings, prayers, and periods of silence), Contemplative Prayer, and Heartwatch (Benedictine Psalms).

Every year the Interns really enjoy having meals together. This year the food was amazing and, because we had special dietary needs (from

gluten free to vegan), everyone was exposed to new recipes. It was lovely to note that no one felt excluded and all knew they were welcome. It was a wonderful picture of unity and community. And we are all a little healthier as a result.

The books that are read in conjunction with the session topics always lead to healthy discussions, and this year was no different. However, we did exchange one of the books this year and included "Celebration of Discipline" by Richard Foster. It was really well received. Another new thing this year was the incorporation of a buddy system for accountability and encouragement, which worked well.

As the Internship comes to an end, and Interns take on an independent project for ongoing application, I'm excited to see that people are stretching themselves in their choice of projects. This year Interns have decided to do such things as creating a dedicated prayer space, memorizing Scripture, and creating a Rule of Life.

Thank you to Elaine Moran who assisted me and to the Guest Practitioners and Spiritual Directors who continue to provide insightful training and willingly donate their time and expertise.

God is at work and we give praise.

Prayer Truck

Jody Balint



Photos from Prayer Truck closing potluck July 2018.

Prayer Truck is GOHOP's summer ministry for the month of July, where prayer and cold water is offered to those in the downtown core. Again, with gratitude GOHOP partnered with the Living Rock to park their U-Haul truck behind the Living Rock's building. The truck is decorated as a cozy living room with carpets, oversized pillows and twinkling lights, so people can relax and feel at home. Brown paper covers the walls as a place for individuals to write their thoughts and prayers.

One thing is very clear about the prayer truck: it is a holy place. It is a place where Christ's Presence is felt. No one debates theology. There is no right or wrong way to praise, worship or love the Lord. It is just a place for people to come together and spent time with God.

When on the prayer truck you have the privilege of praying with many people. Those who question God or who were angry with God. There are those who worship from different faiths. The people who come by the truck are young and old, rich and poor, on their way to work or going



home after a long day at the office. The stories that are heard vary from those living on the streets, struggling with mental health issues and those whose lives were with filled such pain and sorrow, one questions how they were able to survive it all.

Henri Nouwen once said, "Our humanity comes to its fullest bloom in giving. We become beautiful people when we give whatever we can give: a smile, a handshake, a kiss, an embrace, a word of love, a present, a part of our life...all of our life." Prayer truck is humbling. You sit, you listen, you pray, and you watch; as you watch, you can almost see, at times God lifting up those who come and wrapping them up in a blanket of His strength, His resilience and His love.

Prayer truck is a place where God's compassion and love are overwhelming and fully present. It is a place where people can come to pray and just spend some time with God.



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PRAYER ROOM

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