

Our History and Congregation



Melrose Community Church and Pastoral Profile

Introduction:

Melrose Community Church is trusting God to lead this church into new, faith-filled seasons of spiritual growth and ministry effectiveness. Building on what God has done in the past, we are seeking to discover the man whom God has chosen to serve as our next Lead Pastor. He will be a godly Shepherd who, together with the Board and others in leadership and ministry, will give overall leadership to this congregation. The Melrose Constitution lists the following qualifications for a pastor or elder:

- the character and reputation requirements of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9;
- evidence of the call of God into ministry;
- the ability to handle the Word of God and the duties of the office;
- all requirements for membership.

Melrose Church History:

Melrose Community Church is a 97-year-old church in North Toronto. It began as a Sunday School and has grown into a caring church with a heart for missions and a sense of being a 'church family'. Originally a gospel mission, it became affiliated with the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptists in 1953. Many of the congregation currently do not have strong Baptist roots. The sanctuary will hold between 200 and 250, but at its peak in the late 1980s between 150 and 200 were attending regularly, and there were 2 pastors, with a Sunday School bus bringing in children from a lower income area in the west of the community. In the 1990s many church members retired, passed away or moved out of the community and the congregation has shrunk significantly.

The Melrose Congregation:

Currently the one Sunday service attracts 50 - 65 people including up to a dozen online. Some come from the immediate neighbourhood and others from further away. Demographically there is a gap in the 20 - 40 age range, although we have seen some young families join the church in the past few years. The congregation includes some who have been attending Melrose all their life and some who have joined more recently. The congregation's roots are Euro-Canadian but with a growing number of Filipinos, Caribbean and others. The church Board includes Filipinos and a Caribbean man, and the Associate Pastor is a Filipino.

Our Neighbourhood and Building

The Melrose Neighbourhood:

The area around the church and to the east of Avenue Road is predominantly white and affluent, although it is becoming more ethnically diverse. To the west of Avenue Road are many affluent Jewish homes, a good number of which have Filipino caregivers. Income levels drop significantly as one moves from East to West, with some subsidized housing communities west of Bathurst. The church has a vision to reach out to the community, including Filipino caregivers and others.

In recent years, the church has been intentionally seeking greater engagement with the community through various programs like food drives, prayer walks and hosting community events e.g. a Community Easter Egg Hunt. In addition, a group goes out in the community praying every second Saturday. A Scout troop meets weekly in the building as does a SportsBall group, and the church is in discussion with a preschool to run a full-day program out of the building.

In the course of the year, we see some visitors, while others drift away. A few stay and join in the life of the church. Most of the visitors find the church via a web search.

Melrose Building:

The sanctuary building was built in the 1960s, with an addition built in the early 1990s to provide additional office and meeting space. It is a 20 minute walk from a subway station but on a good bus route. There is parking behind the building and street parking. The original building includes a large function room in the basement with some additional classroom space and kitchen. The basement facilities are used by our tenants. There is also an unfinished space in the “new” basement which needs some renovation to be useable. The facilities are well kept and functional but there are longer-term upgrades needed, and some incomplete projects e.g. the “new” basement and a basement accessible washroom.



Vision

A Jesus-centred community
Connecting lovingly
With our neighbours.

Mission

Growing together in Jesus
Serving our neighbours
Sharing His love.

Values

1. We are committed to God and are guided by His word.
2. We are a praying community.
3. We believe all people matter to God and so they matter to us.
4. We are made to worship God and reflect his creativity in all we do.
5. We are actively engaged in the world, convinced that God is already there at work



Melrose Vision, Mission and Values

In 2018, the church leadership and congregation revised the church's Vision and Mission statements, and produced a Values Statement. These are referenced regularly by the church and have impacted church ministry over the last five years.

Melrose has a reputation as a warm, friendly and somewhat informal community, committed to prayer and with a history of sending missionaries around the world. The church has embraced some significant change in recent years including replacing the pews with comfortable chairs, adopting a new leadership structure and focusing more on community engagement. These changes have created a new sense of momentum and some growth in numbers attending services.

Melrose has a strong history of participation from the core congregation, with the majority of the congregation involved in one or more of the ministry teams. As a small church, Melrose struggles with staffing and risks burning out the most committed. However, the church has a good core of godly people with a theological background and a range of giftedness, including four or five who preach regularly.

Melrose's Statement of Faith is aligned with the Canadian Evangelical tradition and the church adheres to the Fellowship Baptist policies. At the same time, the church has intentionally cultivated a "big tent" culture with room for diverse theological positions while holding to our Vision, Mission, Values and the Statement of Faith. For instance, although Melrose does not appoint women elders or pastors, the church leadership includes those holding both complementarian and egalitarian positions.

Our Leadership and Governance and Finances

Melrose Leadership and Governance:

In 2019, the church adopted a new leadership team model with a Lead pastor and Ministry Team that are all part-time and, in most cases bi-vocational. The Ministry Team meets weekly, reports to and is appointed by the Board. Its makeup has varied but currently consists of the Lead Pastor (1 day a week), the Associate Pastor (2.5 days a week), and the Congregational Care Coordinator (2 days a week). The Church Administrator (3 days a week) supports the team. A volunteer Elder also serves on the Ministry Team as Community Engagement Coordinator.

The Ministry Team model was recently reviewed by the church leadership and congregation and was strongly supported. The church intends to continue with this model. However, the church recognizes that a one-day a week lead Pastor role is not sustainable. The current pastor has served since April, 2021 but will step down in April, 2025. We anticipate that the next pastor will serve at least half-time.

Melrose Finances:

Like many small, urban churches, Melrose cannot, at this time, afford what would be considered an appropriate full-time lead pastor's salary. The new Lead Pastor should be available for a minimum half-time position and may be bi-vocational. The church is open to hiring an experienced pastor or bringing on someone who could develop into the Lead Pastor role in time.



The Pastor We Envision

Relationship with God: The pastor must have a deep love for Jesus and a mature spiritual life. He must be a student of the scriptures, committed to living in obedience to the Lord's direction in every area of life and ministry.

Relationship with People: The pastor must have a deep love for people. He will have the gifting and ability to engage with people of all ages and backgrounds, in a highly relational manner. He will demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ to others with an open and caring spirit and a tender heart for the marginalized. He will embrace diversity and seek out ways to create an open and hospitable atmosphere for seekers who are unfamiliar with church traditions. He will be a student of new ways of interacting with congregants, across the ethnic and generational diversities that characterize our community.

Relationship with the Community: Our new pastor will have a strong commitment to engage with the community-at-large, and with the broader culture. He will understand and appreciate the "big city" urban context. He will have experience serving in multi-cultural communities. He will have a track record (perhaps as a volunteer) of creating community and groups that draw people into relationships and growth.

Commitment to Melrose's Vision, Mission and Values: The pastor is the primary champion and guardian of the church's vision and mission and must exemplify our values. He will ensure that life and work of the church is guided by the vision and mission, and practiced in line with our values.

Called to Pastoral Ministry: Our new pastor must be gifted and called to pastoral ministry. He will be strongly committed to the church as God's way of reaching the world, and celebrate the strategic importance of small churches to reach the local community. He will have a heart for congregational care.

Able to Teach: The pastor must be able to handle the scriptures accurately and apply them effectively in both teaching and preaching. He will have theological training or be open to pursuing theological training. He will be comfortable in a "big tent" irenic ecclesiological environment, affirming the church's Statement of Faith, while welcoming theological diversity with gentleness and respect e.g. the role of women in leadership.



The Pastor We Envision

Able to Lead: The Pastor will be able to inspire, motivate, foster accountability, and provide mentorship with an understanding of church governance and administration. He must be able to lead and build teams; someone who identifies giftedness in others of all ages and helps people grow and take on ministry. He will be a person of vision and ideas who also can bring things to fruition. He will be comfortable leading in a variety of worship styles, flexible and open to trying new things. He will be gifted in rallying people around ideas without bull dozing his ideas through. He will be someone who can build consensus and a shared vision.



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