

Introduction

St. John's was built by the architectural firm Gordon & Helliwell, which specialized in the popular gothic revival style and designed most of their church buildings for the Presbyterian Church, though Church of the Messiah on Avenue Road is another example of work they did for the Anglican Church. St. John's is a relatively unadorned example of the gothic revival style, which is consistent with the firm's other work. For ornate details, one needs to look to the interior woodwork and windows, whose beauty and detail is highlighted by the unique colour scheme of the interior walls.

Church design is undergirded by the idea that the Church is the place where heaven and earth meet. The incarnational nature of the Christian faith –the belief that God reaches out to humanity through the world, most notably in the incarnation of Christ – has, from the Church's earliest days, inspired artists and architects to communicate the tenets of the faith through their works.

Broadly speaking, the elements of church architecture are guided by a desire to reflect the nature and the goal of the life of faith. The nave, which takes its name from *navis*, the Latin word for a ship, is the main body of the church and the place where worshippers a place where we embark on our earthly journey of faith. These resonances are visible at St. John's both in the shape of the nave and the wooden beams of the ceiling. Looking up, one can easily imagine that they are entering the hold of a great ship as they walk through the doors.

St. John's is also an example of a cruciform church, meaning that the building as a whole is shaped like a cross. The nave, chancel, and sanctuary run along the vertical axis, while the horizontal beam of the cross is represented in the transepts. Church buildings are often intentionally shaped like this central symbol of the Christian faith both as a sign to passersby and a reminder to worshippers that worship and the life of faith are meant to reflect the complete and self-giving love of Christ. At St. John's, the transepts now contain the children's corner and a space for hospitality, where food is served at coffee hour and events. This use of the space reflects the high value St. John's worshipping community places on inclusivity and hospitality as important ways of living out our faith in Jesus.

by the Rev. Alexandra Stone



St. John's (1957)



Centennial Tea 2023