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Salute the Past

*Lay Hold on
the Future*

*80 Years
of
Ministry*

1881 - 1961

St. John's Church
(ANGLICAN)

WEST TORONTO

Humberside and Quebec



This is Our Church NOW

A heritage passed on
to us by many eager
hands.

St. John's Church West Toronto

Chronological History

In 1879 — Mrs. B. W. Murray, then living in what is now Swansea, disturbed about the lack of Church and Sunday School facilities in the sparsely settled area later to be West Toronto Junction, held Sunday School in her living room during summer for children in the district. Later in the same year arrangements were made to hold services for parents in Mr. McGregor's home, located at the corner of Elizabeth (now Runnymede) and Annette Sts.

The first vestry meeting was held Dec. 19, 1879, with Rev. J. H. McCollum of St. Thomas' Church presiding. Subsequently, services were held in a building at the corner of Elizabeth and Louisa Sts., now Runnymede Road and St. Johns Road.



Two years later a wooden church was erected on a triangle of land donated by Messrs. Fiske and Wadsworth, and situated at the junction of St. John's Rd. and Dundas St. The cost of the church was \$700 and it was formally opened by Bishop Sweatman on November 20, 1881. Shortly after Mr. McCollum had to give up charge of the mission and the church was attached to St. Mark's, Carlton (now West Toronto). The ministry was carried on by divinity students and many prominent Wycliffe College graduates received their early training in St. John's.

West Toronto Junction was expanding rapidly as a railroad centre and in 1887 St. John's became a separate parish with Rev. A. C. Miles as the first rector. Plans were laid for the erection of a larger church and on January 26, 1890, the new brick church seating 350 was opened. The new church cost \$8,737 and the frame building became the Church Hall.



In 1892, Mr. Miles was succeeded by Rev. (later Canon) R. P. McKim and he in turn was followed by Rev. F. H. (later Archbishop) Duvernay in 1895. Under these two rectors the parish flourished and became the missionary minded Church it still is. In 1903 the church was enlarged and in 1904, Mr. Duvernay was elected Bishop of Caledonia. His successor at St. John's was Rev. T. Beverley Smith.

The Rev. T. Beverley Smith was rector from 1904-1917 and during his incumbency great expansion and many changes took place. In the early part of his rectorship, the Junction, as it was called, was just emerging from a heart breaking business slump caused by the rerouting of the railroad down the Don Valley. During the period from 1905-1914 there was a great influx of people from the Old Country and the Junction rapidly spread out along Annette St. to Jane and up Runnymede

Rd. to St. Clair. Many of these new people were Anglicans and to meet the needs of the expanding area, missions were opened at St. Clair and Runnymede and on Annette St. near Jane St. These missions are now the parishes of the Church of the Advent and St. Paul's Runnymede. To accommodate the large Sunday School and the many flourishing organizations of St. John's, a new parish hall was built. This parish hall (now the YWCA building) at St. Johns Rd. and Dundas St., was opened in 1913 and was an active centre of parochial life. With the advent of war in 1914 the duties of the rector became even more onerous and in 1917, Mr. Smith was forced to give up and Rev. R. MacNamara, a returned chaplain, was chosen as rector.

The Major, as he was affectionately known to many, came to St. John's as rector when another major change was taking place in the "Junction", now known as Ward 7 and part of Toronto. Bloor St. had been opened up as a main traffic artery and many new homes had been built south and west of the older area. The church was now on the edge of the parish rather than in the centre.

After much prayer and discussion the present rectory was erected on High Park Ave. and a site for a church purchased at the corner of Quebec and Humberside—the geographical centre of the parish. The corner stone of the new church was laid May 5, 1923, by Bishop Sweeney and the church opened for worship on November 4 of the same year.

The beautiful Ascension window, a memorial to those who made the supreme sac-

rifice in the first Great War, was dedicated a week later by Bishop Reeve. At that time there was a large group of young people in the parish and Bible classes, AYPAs and all phases of parish life were given a great impetus by the new church. Of course the building had to be paid for and the story of St. John's over the next 20 years was one of continual effort to reduce the debt. Mr. MacNamara's health finally broke down and he retired in 1935 after 18 years of inspirational and devoted leadership.

As successor to Mr. MacNamara, St. John's was fortunate in securing Rev. (now Bishop) H. R. Hunt. He brought to us a driving zeal which, combined with his organizing ability, resulted in a clearance of the debt by November, 1944, despite the outbreak of the Second World War and the tail end of the depression. On St. Luke's Day in 1944, Mr. Hunt sat in the church to receive the gifts of the people and by evening over \$10,000 had been received. This was sufficient to retire the balance of debt and on Sunday, November 19, 1944, the church was consecrated by Archbishop Owen.

Mr. Hunt continued to serve as rector until 1949 when he was called to be rector of the Church of the Redeemer where he continued to give dynamic leadership. He was succeeded by Rev. Clinton Cross and under his leadership our Church Hall was remodelled and subsequently the church itself was renovated to the present beautiful House of God in which we worship. In 1955, Mr. Cross was asked by the Bishop to accept the rectorship of St. George's, Oshawa, which, owing to the long illness of its rector had not been progressing as well as it should.

Our new rector, Rev. Reginald Stackhouse, assumed his duties in February, 1956. Under his leadership St. John's kept forging ahead. New problems due to a changing district and the influx of many New Canadians, some of whom had no church affiliation, presented a challenge which had to be met. That challenge is with us yet. St. John's is no longer a suburban church but is still in the heart of a large residential district and has the opportunity for service presented by such districts.

In late 1959, we purchased the house at the corner of High Park and Humberside. It was completely redecorated and refurbished, and is now a useful addition to our facilities, providing separate rooms for Sunday School classes and numerous organizations. English classes for new Canadians and the Friendly Corner Group for senior citizens are some of the social service projects using the house.

In 1960, Mr. Stackhouse decided to take further theological studies to prepare for a teaching career. After prayerful consideration and consultation he regretfully resigned as Rector, leaving us in August.

Rev. Gordon Philpotts accepted the invitation to become our new Rector. He and his family joined us in September, 1960. Already we have felt the impact of his personality and leadership. We look forward to many happy years of — to use the AYPA motto — "Worship, Work, Fellowship and Edification" with him to guide us.

Our slogan for this 80th anniversary year so well points to our duty — "Salute the Past, Lay Hold on the Future".

Over the 80 years of our parish life we have been blessed with good leadership. Two of our rectors — Rev. F. H. Duvernet and Rev. H. R. Hunt were elected Bishops as were also two of our assistants, Rev. Walter Barfoot — later Primate of all Canada, and Rev. Stephen Wong — now serving in China.

Down through the years many of our young men have entered the ministry. Others have served the church in other capacities. Several of our women have also served in "far places of earth" and others are, or have been, active in social service work locally.

THE CHURCH SCHOOL

St. John's was initially started by one woman (Mrs. B. W. Murray) because of her con-



cern for the spiritual welfare of the children in a growing community. Since that time the Parish has continued to furnish facilities for the training of children from the beginners class to those of Bible class age. Now there are Bible study groups for adults on Wednesday and Sunday.

As in the case of most Church schools we have had our peak periods and our low per-

iods, but the Church School has carried on overcoming overcrowded conditions and teacher shortages until now we have excellent facilities in our Parish House and the Church Hall, and experienced direction in modern teaching methods.

We owe a great deal to those teachers who persisted in the early years in what at times must have seemed a fruitless task. Despite crowded conditions and lack of equipment, regularly they came out on Sunday not knowing whether they would have one class or three. They were the pioneers and many of our present Church members will remember them gratefully.

THE BIBLE CLASSES

The story of St. John's would not be complete without a record of the many Bible classes which were an important part of the church life and produced many of our present parish leaders. Although a number of the classes through the years were not known by any special name, other than their leader's, they all filled an integral part in the parish life of their day.

Here are some of the best-remembered classes:

The Bula Matadi Boys' Bible Class was founded by Miss Hilda May in 1895 and flourished until the late 1940's. Through the faithful teaching and devotion of Miss May, a number of young men and boys from this class have gone on to serve in the ministry of the Church, and in other Christian endeavours.

The Kiselo Girls' Class was founded by Mrs. W. G. MacNamara in 1919 and survived over

twenty years. Many of the original members of this class are still active and devoted members of our congregation. Starting with a membership of six, the class grew very rapidly under Mrs. MacNamara's leadership. The class was very missionary minded; two of its early members went out to the mission field, Miss Florence Giles going to the Arctic and Miss Edna Elliott going to Japan.

The Alert Young Men's Bible Class was organized in 1923 by Rev. W. J. Minto Swan. With an initial membership of 12, it grew in less than two years to be one of the five largest Bible classes in Toronto, with an average attendance of over 100 members. Lasting until the second World War called most of its members, the class made a decided contribution to the life of the Church and to West Toronto in general, actively participating in community activities and sports. Several of our wardens came from the ranks of the Alerts as have many leaders in other fields.

The Fahelo Girls' Bible Class started by Miss Edith Code in the middle 1920's to provide instruction and guidance for the girls who were too young for the Kiselo class and who had graduated from the Junior Sunday School. This group continued for about eight years at which time it was amalgamated with the Kiselo Class.

The Trufalo Girls' Class was organized about 1927 for the girls from 14-17 years as the Kiselo and Fahelo classes were still active and accommodation in the Church Hall was too limited to enlarge the classes. Later this class amalgamated with the others making one large group.

The Apex Boys' Bible Class was organized in the early 1930's for the boys graduating

from the Junior Sunday School and still too young for the Alerts. Its first leader was Dr. John Lappin and the class finally dissolved in 1947 when a joint boys and girls class was organized.

The Trinity Girls' Class which was to all intent and purposes the successor to Fahelo and Trufalo, flourished under the leadership of Mrs. G. Lindsay until after the second World War when the girls and boys classes were combined into one.

Our Church can well be proud of these Bible classes for the leadership in church and neighbourhood life that they provided both while active and subsequently.

THE CHOIR

The choir of St. John's Church has been blessed through its eighty years by the efforts of faithful men and women. It has always been a voluntary choir recruited from members of the congregation, augmented by a few outsiders interested in church choral work. Originally a non-surpliced choir, after some controversy and through the kindness of some members of the congregation, vestments were provided in the early part of this century and the choir became fully functional in its part in the services of the church.

As expressed by our choirmaster and organist the function of a church choir is to promote the spiritual through the medium of music. Since music is cultural, the spiritual and the cultural therefore become interdependent.

Our choir has always tried to forward aspects of the social side of life by holding activities not directly connected with music. In this they have been very successful and have always been noted for the harmony and

fellowship pervading the group. The members themselves pay fees which provide funds for many supplementary expenses and help the church in meeting parish expenses.

For many years we have been fortunate in having as Director, Mr. P. W. MacDonald, an outstanding musician and composer of many anthems and musical arrangements. Under his leadership and with the faithful efforts of the members, St. John's Choir is recognized as one of the outstanding Anglican choirs in this area.

THE WOMAN'S AUXILIARY TO THE ANGLICAN CHURCH

In the year 1892, the AFTERNOON BRANCH of the W.A. in St. John's Church, held its inaugural meeting, and became part of the Dominion wide organization of the Woman's Auxiliary to the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada. An EVENING BRANCH was later formed for ladies who preferred an evening meeting and the JUNIOR AUXILIARY (girls 7 to 12 years), has a long history in the annals of our Church. During the more recent years, a new group called ST. MONICA'S was formed, comprised of young mothers, whose main activity concerns the children in our parish. The GIRLS' AUXILIARY for teen aged girls is important to the W.A. and we are happy that a branch has been started at St. John's. The newest development in the expanding W.A. is the formation of a morning group called the "WILHELMINA MacNAMARA" Branch, in honour of a wonderfully devoted member of the W.A., who has been a Life Member for over fifty years.

The members of all these branches have aided in supporting the workers sent out by

the W.A. The "Dominion Pledge Fund", has paid the salaries of teachers, missionaries, nurses, doctors, etc. The "United Thank Offering" has helped in the training of women in the Anglican Women's Training College, and has provided pensions for retired workers.

During the recent years, our name has been changed and we are now the Woman's Auxiliary to the Anglican Church of Canada, and all members have been admonished to work not only for "missions", but to assist in the tasks of the whole church. Social Service has become a growing and important part of our program. Prayerful and financial support has been given to the Down Town Church Workers' Association, Nathanael Institute, the Anglican Houses, and Strachan Houses — one of our Anglican Homes for the Aged, operated by two committees of the W.A.

So widespread and world-encircling is the outreach of the Woman's Auxiliary that it is impossible to tell here, the whole story, but St. John's Church can be proud that so many of its members belong to this great organization, which was recently described by one of the clergy as "next to Synod, the most important part of the Anglican Church".

THE WOMEN'S GUILD 1908 - 1961

Fifty-three years ago, an organization for women of the Church was started, to be known as the Women's Guild. Its by-laws stated that this group was formed to assist the Rector and Wardens. This the members have been doing all through the years in a very magnificent manner. The financial aid given to the wardens has been outstanding, amounting to thousands of dollars. This was particularly helpful in the days when the present new building was being erected. After the death of the Reverend Bev-

erley Smith, a fund was started by the Guild members for the Memorial Window in the Chancel. In later years, the first hundred dollars was given by the women for the "New Rectory" fund, and the Memorial Tablet in memory of the Rev. R. MacNamara was sponsored by the Guild.

In February 1927, the Unit System was established. This comprised ten Units led by ten Captains. Under this new system, the Women's Guild has flourished and accomplished more and more work for the parish. Along with financial aid to the Church, a tremendous amount of Social Service work was done in the years of the depression. Hundreds of house calls were made by the members, and many families were helped with gifts of clothing and food. During the two world wars, many boxes were sent overseas, and a great deal of assistance was given to the Red Cross Society. The Guild was also represented in the Women's League of Nations.

Another phase of work undertaken by the Women's Guild was that of aiding the Choir; many hours being spent in sewing gowns and surplices. Recently, the money donated by the Women's Guild has been helpful in paying the Church Extension Allotments. (N.P.) While the Guild was originally started to aid its own Church, much work has been done beyond the Parish, and the members are currently contributing to the needs of the Canadian Save the Children Fund, the Downtown Church Workers' Association, and the Woman's Auxiliary.

Space does not permit listing the names of devoted women who have given so much of their Time, Talent, and Treasure, in the past years, but we accept the challenge to continue the work which they started so many years ago!

ANGLICAN YOUNG PEOPLES ASSOCIATION

St. John's AYPA has a long and eventful history. Founded about ten years prior to the first World War the group has continued to flourish to the present day. During some periods, due to lack of young people of the particular age group, attendance has been small but the organization has never ceased to function.

During the twenty year period between the first and second World Wars, St. John's was one of the dominant groups in AYPA in Toronto, taking an active part in all local council activities and working out constructive programs within our own parish. Most members of this group also participated actively in other phases of church work.

For many years commencing in 1924 the AYPA produced an annual play and during this time also was active in local council and community sports with Ladies' and Men's softball teams, debating teams, Inter-church tennis, and in conjunction with the Alert Bible class sponsored basketball and hockey teams. St. John's group was usually the largest at the annual local council picnic, winning the field day shield three years in succession. Our ladies' softball team also won the championship the first year the league was organized. Boys' teams won the hockey championship and invariably finished in the playoff in softball and basketball.

The slogan "For Christ and His Church" and the program of "Worship, Work, Fellowship and Edification" have been the keynotes to the long success of this group.

At present there are two sections — The Omega group for 18 years and over and The Alpha group for 15 - 17 years.

CHI-RHO FELLOWSHIP

For several years while Rev. Ivan Smith was the assistant curate a branch of the Chi-Rho fellowship was formed. Many former members of the AYPA enjoyed the fellowship and the opportunity to participate in church work.

BOY SCOUTS AND CUBS

The original charter to the 7th Toronto Troop was issued in October, 1909, and it has been registered annually ever since. The objective was to develop good citizenship habits and to train the boys in self-reliance, obedience, loyalty, unselfishness and in usefulness to the public and to promote their spiritual, mental and physical development. The meetings started in St. John's church, Dundas St. and St. John's Rd. and in Annette St. School.

As the movement was comparatively new in West Toronto, the Troop grew slowly. By the outbreak of war in 1914 there were 10 patrols.

Although many of the older boys enlisted, the Troop struggled along but was moved to Victoria Church where the new scoutmaster was located. However in 1921, the Troop headquarters returned to St. John's and a Cub Pack was formed. Since that time the Troop and Pack have continued steadily with some rather lean years, but on the whole they have served the community well.

Many King's and Queen's Scouts have come from the Troop and Pack and we have every reason to feel proud of their long and honorable record over 50 years.

Down through the years both Troop and Pack have enjoyed remarkable success in competition at camporees and their trophies and pennants are numerous.

12TH TORONTO GIRL GUIDES AND BROWNIES

In the fall of 1939, a roomful of eager 8-to-11-year-olds assembled in St. John's Parish Hall to form the wonderful fairyland of small girls that is known as a Brownie Pack. A group of mothers had felt the need for an activity of this sort within the Parish. Their sons romped through Cubs, while their daughters looked on wistfully. They persuaded Mrs. H. E. Woolley, who had two Brownie-age daughters, previous experience and a boundless imagination, to assume the leadership. Before you could say "Fairy Ring", the Parish Hall became a woodland glade where dancing groups of elves, fairies, and gnomes worked their mysterious magic once a week. This was the beginning of the 12th Toronto Brownie Pack.

However, time, tide, and young girls do not stand still, and it wasn't long before some of the Brownies began to talk about "flying up" to Guides — but there were no Guides. So it was that the 12th Toronto Girl Guide Company was formed in 1942, under the capable leadership of Miss June Knudsen. Both the Brownies and the Guides of the 12th can be proud of their records in the past twenty years. Although Guiding is a non-denominational organization, we have always tried to show our appreciation to St. John's by faithful attendance at Church Parades and co-operation in parish projects.

When, in 1958, a meeting place was needed to re-open the West Division Ranger Company, St. John's was chosen for its central location and excellent facilities. The Company consists of girls from 15 to 21 years of age from the west end, and its chief aim — Service — has been carried out in many interesting projects and activities.

MARRIED COUPLES' CLUB

One of our newly-formed organizations is the Married Couples' club. Established in 1952 under the guidance of Rev. C. D. Cross, then rector of the parish, the club has flourished through the years and has served as a model for a number of other similar clubs. It meets once a month for dinner with a program arranged by the members and has served as an excellent means of welcoming new couples into the parish.