



100 YEARS ON HUMBERSIDE



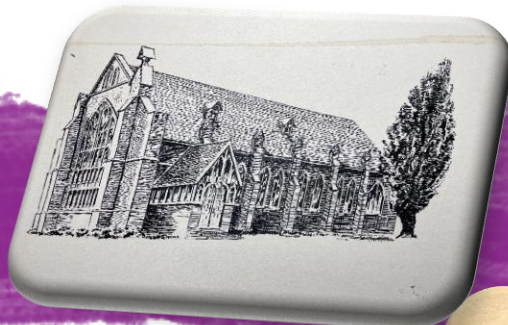
OPEN HEARTS
OPEN MINDS
OPEN DOORS



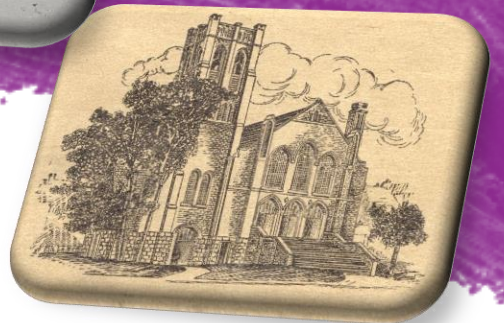
1879-1881



1881-1889



1889-1923



1923-

St. John's West Toronto,
Anglican Church

May 27-28, 2023

288 Humberside Avenue

sjwt.ca



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sjwt.ca/100th

Acknowledgement

Thanks to Christopher Ruty and Michael Taylor for creating this booklet and to the Communications Team, as well as a special thanks to the West Toronto Junction Historical Society Archives, and the Diocese of Toronto Archives. Also, a thank you to the SJWT-100 Team and the volunteers helping with the Doors Open Toronto event.

This booklet, and the wall posters are the result of distilling hundreds of documents that have been retrieved from various archives and also discovered in the church basement, balcony and belltower. Every document discovered has been scanned, organized and made accessible on the 100th website but, most importantly, an ongoing process of creating as complete a historical archive as possible for proper storage at the Diocese of Toronto Archives to ensure that the rich history of St. John's and the people that made it special in decades past are not forgotten.

sjwt.ca/100th



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.

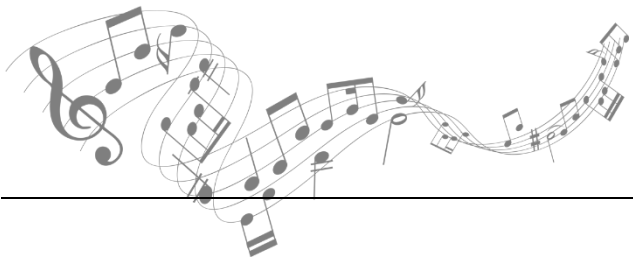
by the Rev. Alexandra Stone



St. John's (1957)



Centennial Tea 2023



A Note on Sound

People often notice that sound carries in a particular way in church buildings, and this is true. Historically, liturgy and church music have been influenced by the architectural design of church buildings. While the soaring arches of the gothic style point one's gaze toward the heavens, they also lead to a high level of reverberation. The chant styles used by priests and other ministers and musical compositions intended for use in worship are often intentionally adapted to the physical proportions of church buildings. In many cases, these musical compositions can only achieve their intended effect when played in churches (or buildings with similar acoustics).

More recently, an emphasis in the opposite direction has begun to influence both architectural choices concerning church buildings and choices about how the interior space is used. A desire for the people to be able to understand and participate in the worship service has made the intelligibility of what is said and sung a priority. This move toward intelligibility and participation can be seen at St. John's in the architecture itself, in the decision to move the altar into the nave and closer to the main body of worshippers, and in the use of modern technology.

by the Rev. Alexandra Stone



Alie, Lee and May singing at Holly Tea, Dec 3, 2022

References

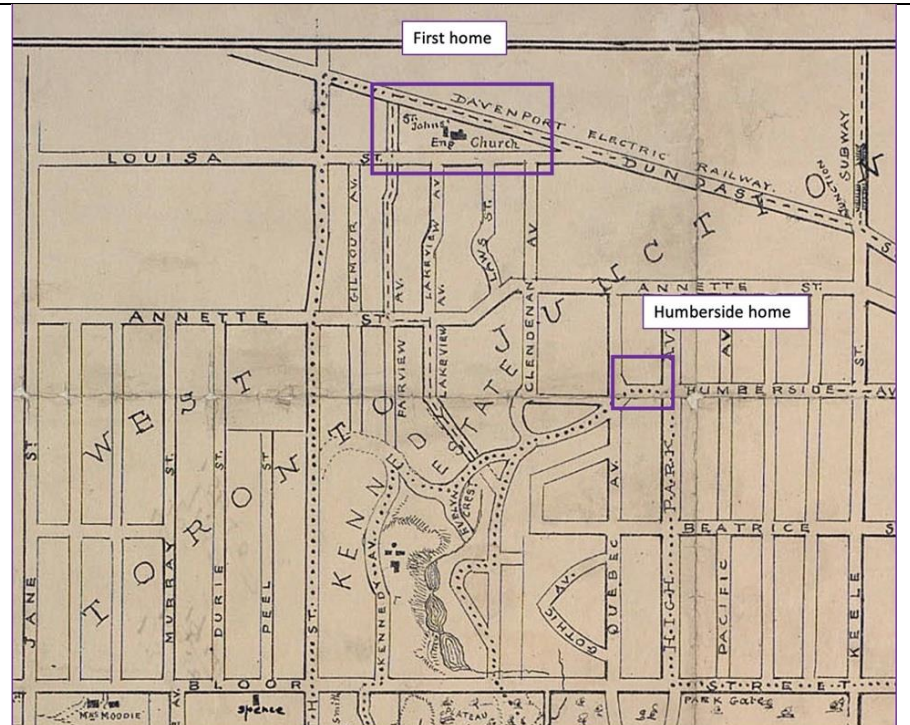
McNamara, Dennis R. *How to Read Churches: a crash course in ecclesiastical architecture*. New York : Rizzoli International Publishers, 2011.

Northwood, T. D. 'Acoustics and church architecture', *Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada*, 39.7, pp. 51-55, August 1, 1962.

Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada 1800-1950.

<http://dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org/node/1592>

WHERE WE USED TO BE



West Toronto Junction, 1894

The origin of St. John's parish dates from 1879, when Julia Henry (later Murray) brought children from the rural homes of Runnymede and Swansea to her home for the area's first Sunday School



The first St. John's Church, 1881-1890

Members of the community, inspired by Julia's efforts, soon held religious services in a small cottage on Runnymede near Annette Street

In 1880, a parcel of land near the intersection of Louisa Street (later St. John's Rd) and Dundas St. was donated for a church, which would be called "St. John's Mission, Runnymede"

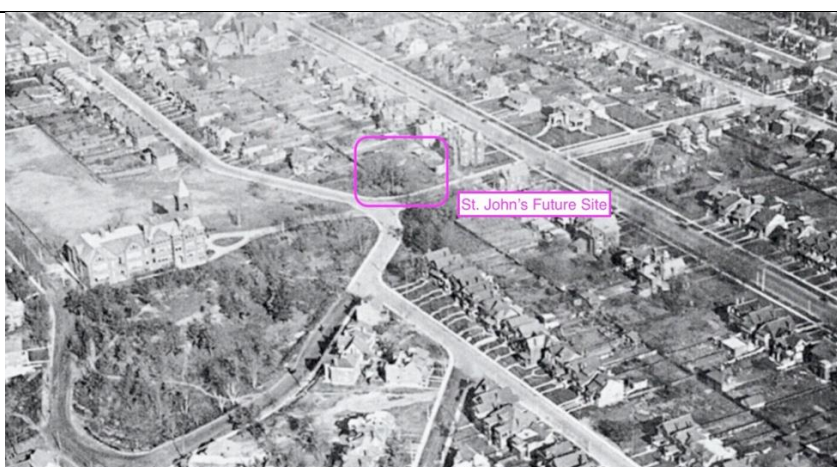
St. John's first home was a modest wooden frame structure that was officially dedicated on Nov. 20, 1881



The second St. John's Church, 1890-1923

By Nov 1887, "St. John's, West Toronto Junction," operated within its own parish, but a larger building was clearly needed

Next to the original church, the cornerstone for a new brick church was laid on May 11, 1889, and it officially opened on Jan. 26, 1890.

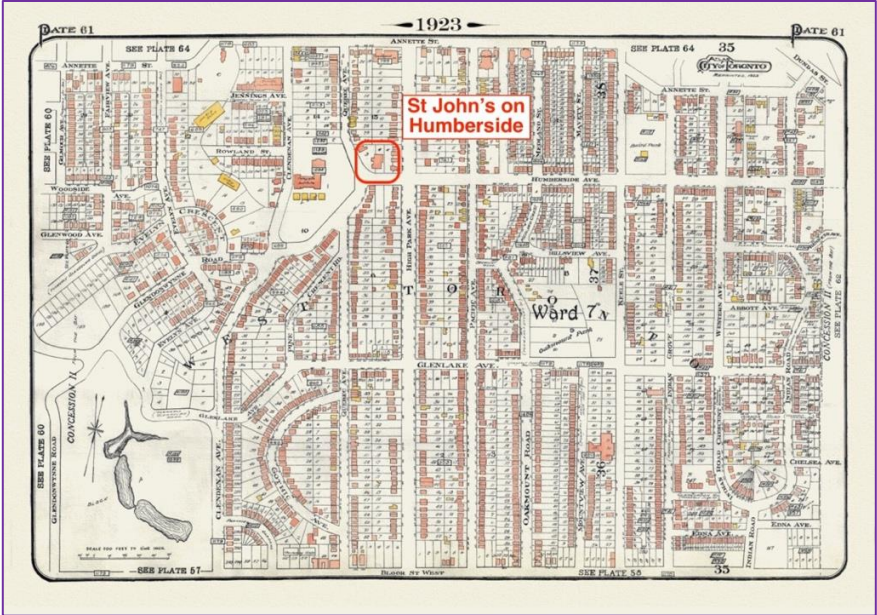


Aerial view, St. John's Future site, c. 1920

By 1917, changing demographics in the Junction, and residential growth between Dundas St. and Bloor St., pointed St. John's to a bold move to what became the geographic centre of the parish

In July 1918, St. John's purchased property on Humberside Ave. between High Park Ave. and Quebec Ave. and began making plans for a new home at 288 Humberside.

WHY WE ARE WHERE WE ARE



The history of St. John's, like the Junction area, has been shaped by its development as a transportation hub, first as a confluence of trails for the Indigenous community



St. John's 2nd church behind sign, Dundas & St. John's Rd., 1923

In 1881, St. John's parish began on a small property where Dundas St. met Louisa (later St. John's Rd) amidst a network of railway and streetcar tracks and industries

After WWI, it was clear that St. John's initial life on Dundas St. had reached its limit as population growth was shifting south. The street railway now extended to High Park, and West Toronto Junction and Bloor West Village became new Toronto suburbs

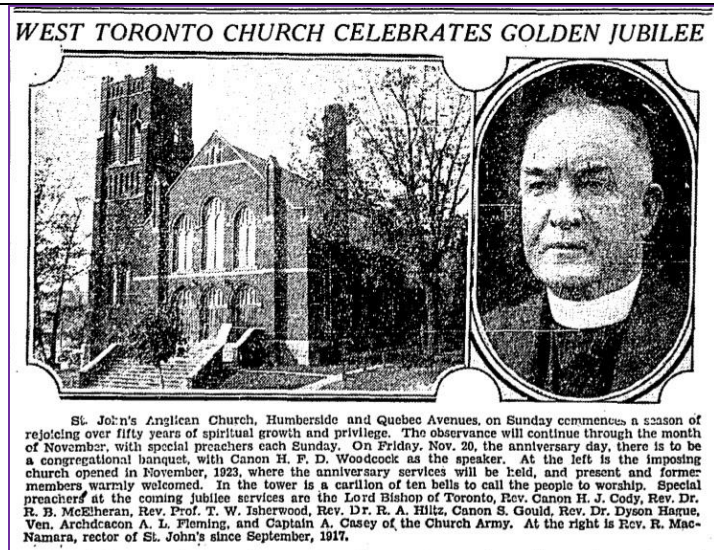
Then in 1923, St. John's built its 3rd church on the increasingly busy Humberside Ave., not long after the TTC launched its first bus route, the #1 "Humberside / Annette" which ran from Humberside and Dundas to High Park Ave, past the church site and north to Annette and west to Runnymede



Waiting for the #1 bus, Humberside & Dundas St., 1923

Between 1921 and 1931, when St. John's celebrated its 50th, Toronto's population had grown from 522,000 to 627,000, with much of that growth based in west Toronto

St. John's had clearly evolved from a suburban congregation into a busy city church



The Globe, Oct. 30, 1931, p. 13

CORNERSTONES STORIES

OLD CORNER-STONE LAID AT ST. JOHN'S

Rector Briefly Reviews
Church's 44 Years of
History

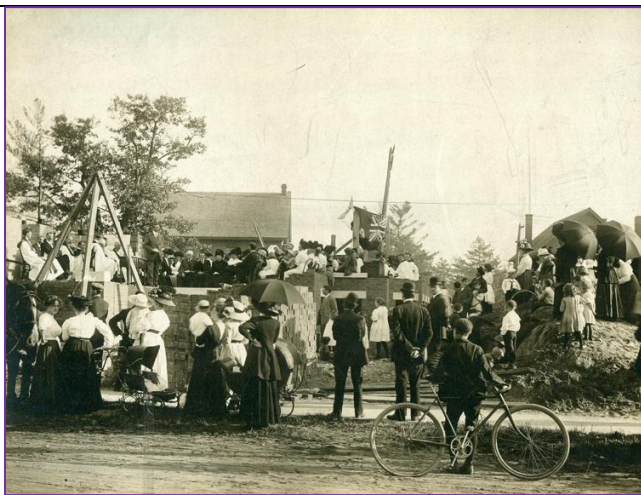
AN IMPRESSIVE CEREMONY

Under smiling skies and in the presence of a goodly gathering of parishioners and clergy, the corner-stone of the new St. John's Anglican Church at Humberside and Quebec avenues was laid Saturday afternoon at 3 o'clock. Right Rev.

The Globe, May 7, 1923, p. 11



A cornerstone can be referred to as a "foundation-stone", and is symbolic of Christ, whom the Apostle Paul referred to as the "head of the corner" and is the "Chief Cornerstone of the Church" (Ephesians 2:20)



May 11, 1889, cornerstone day for 2nd Church

Some cornerstones include time capsules from, or engravings commemorating, the time a particular building was built, or denote previously standing buildings

The 3rd St. John's church cornerstone was laid along with the cornerstone of the parish's 2nd church building, which stood at Dundas St. & St. John's Rd (Malta Park today). That cornerstone was laid on May 11, 1889, with great celebration



On June 7, 1981, a Centennial Stone was added for the 100th of the first church opening, Nov. 20, 1881



West Toronto Weekly, May 3, 1923, p. 1

On May 5, 1923, the cornerstone for the new St. John's on Humberside Ave. was laid by the Bishop of Toronto

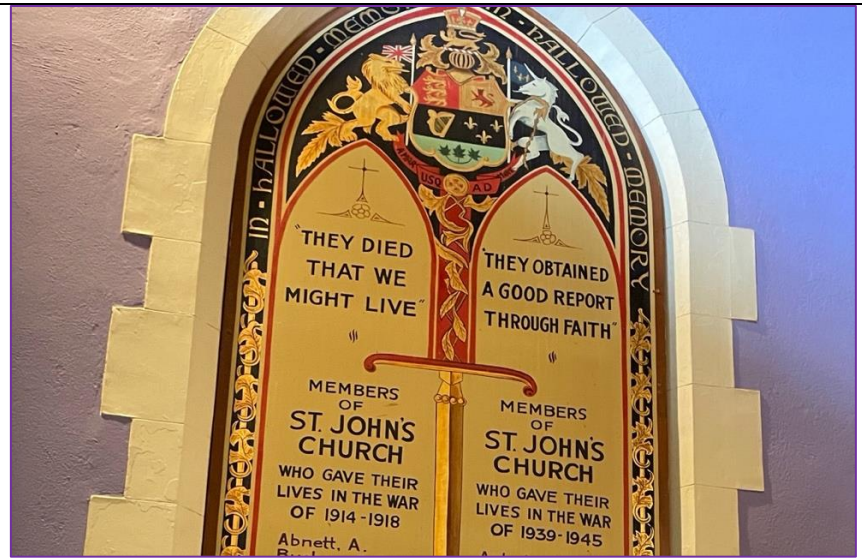
"Under the stone were place a copy of the parish magazine, *The Churchman*, certain historical documents, and the customary coin of the realm."

On Nov 4, 1923, the new St. John's was officially opened, designed by Toronto architects, Gordon & Helliwell, with many elements from the 2nd church integrated into the new church. Its lower portion was constructed of Credit Valley stone, the interior particularly beautiful, with special attention paid to the lighting

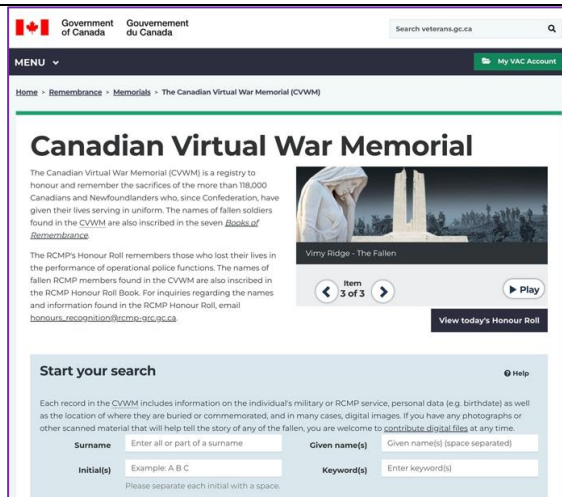


West Toronto Weekly, Nov. 1, 1923, p. 1

PERSONALIZING THE WAR MEMORIAL



St. John's Remembrance Day service includes reading the names of parishioners who gave the ultimate sacrifice during the two world wars and who are listed on the church's distinctive War Memorial Plaque, which was created in 1963



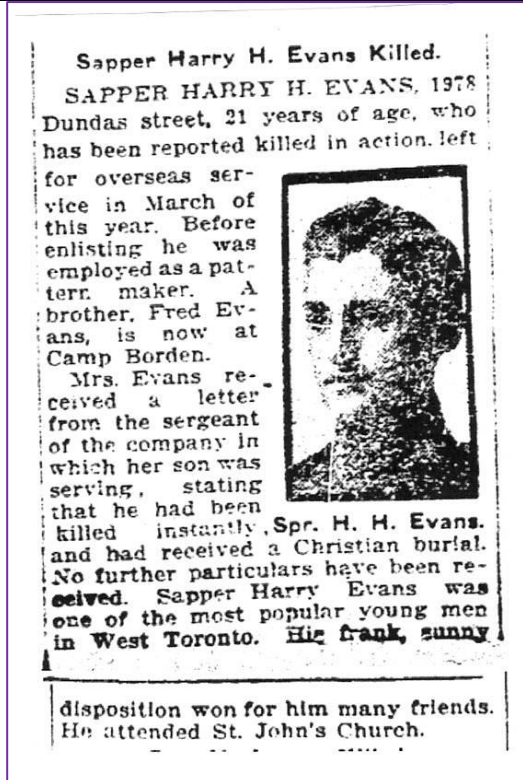
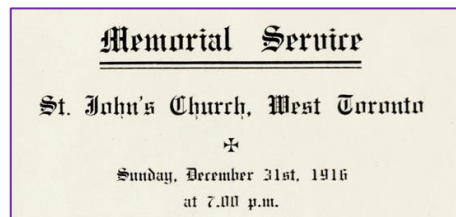
Veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials

Parishioners have gradually lost personal connection with the names

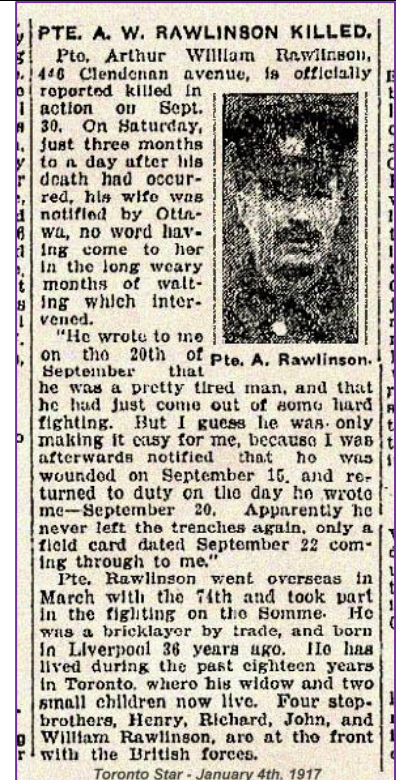
"The Canadian Virtual War Memorial" website helps personalize St. John's parishioners killed during the World Wars

There are entries for most listed on the St. John's War Memorial, along with various documents, photos and newspaper clippings uploaded by family and others, including these examples from the WWI list:

St. John's held a special Memorial Service on Dec. 31, 1916, to honor "Men from St. John's who have Given their Lives for the Empire."



Toronto Star, Sept. 2, 1916

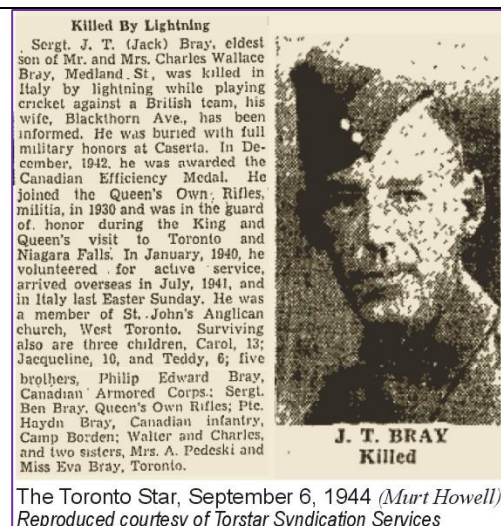


Tor. Star, Jan 4, 1917

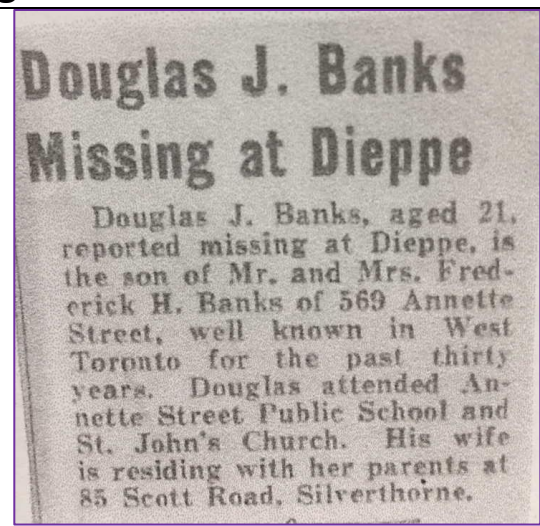
Men from St. John's who have Given their Lives for the Empire :

ALFRED ABNETT April 18th, 1916
HENRY WARREN BAGNALL The Somme, October 2nd, 1916
GEORGE EDWARD BUSHEY St. Julien, May 26th, 1915
ERNEST DOUGLAS The Somme, September 14th-16th, 1916
HARRY H. EVANS The Somme, August 10th, 1916
JOSEPH GILL June 5th, 1916
HARRY HUNT The Somme, October 8th-9th, 1916
WALTER W. SHEPPARD The Somme, September 30th, 1916
CYRIL MONSARRAT THOMPSON Festubert, May 28th, 1915

Some stories about St. John's parishioners listed on the War Memorial killed during WWII:



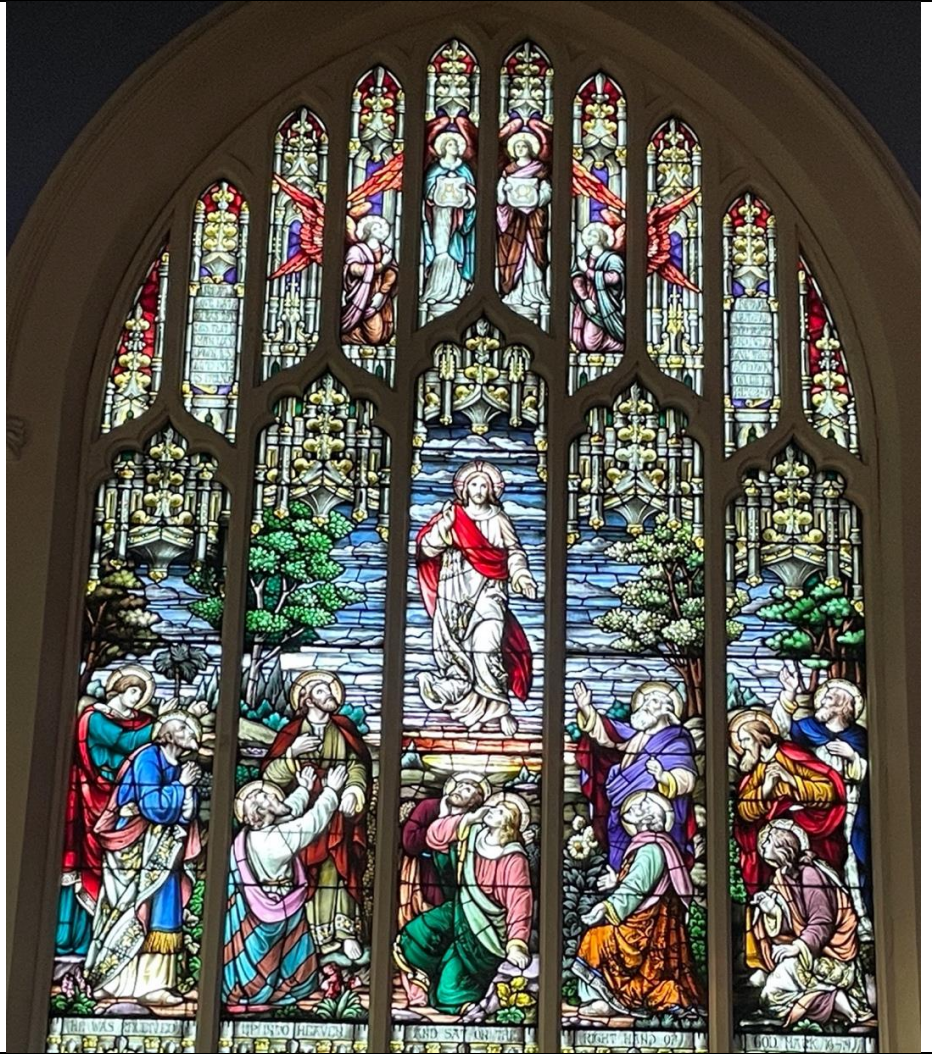
The Toronto Star, September 6, 1944 (Murt Howell)
Reproduced courtesy of Torstar Syndication Services



WINDOWS ON ST. JOHN'S

The stained-glass windows of St. John's Church are a treasure, and a bit of a secret. Given as memorial gifts over the past century, they are of remarkably consistent style, and together present a composite picture of the life of Jesus.

In 2002, the congregation of St. John's agreed to a radical colour scheme for the interior of the church, to better draw attention to the windows.



Most of St. John's stained-glass windows are in the typical 19th century style; deeply saturated colour, dawn, or evening settings, muted green-grey borders with golden stain and black enamel to give nuanced detail to everything from inscriptions to architectural canopies



Most of the windows were designed in Toronto by local firms, Robert McCausland, and N.T. Lyon

Robert McCausland is the oldest stained-glass studio in North America.

ST. JOHN'S MEMORIAL TO SOLDIER HEROES

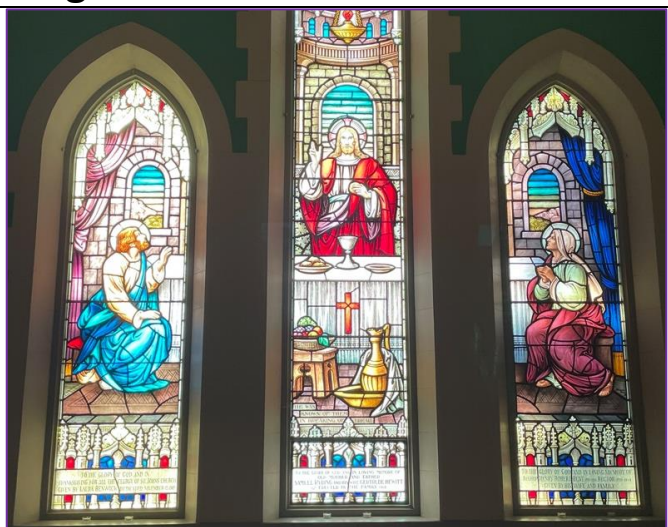
Rt. Rev. W. D. Reeve Conducts Unveiling of Beautiful Window

IT PORTRAYS ASCENSION

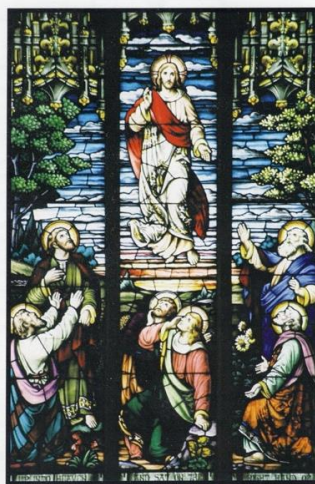
A strong preference for memorial windows in churches, as against monuments in cemeteries, was expressed yesterday morning by Right Rev. W. D. Reeve, Assistant Bishop of Toronto, at a service of unveiling and dedication of a memorial window to the men of St. John's Church, West Toronto, who gave their lives in the great war.

The Globe, Nov. 12, 1923

These windows are an irreplaceable artistic endeavour and spiritual resource, and part of the heritage of the West Toronto neighbourhood



Open Doors and Open Windows

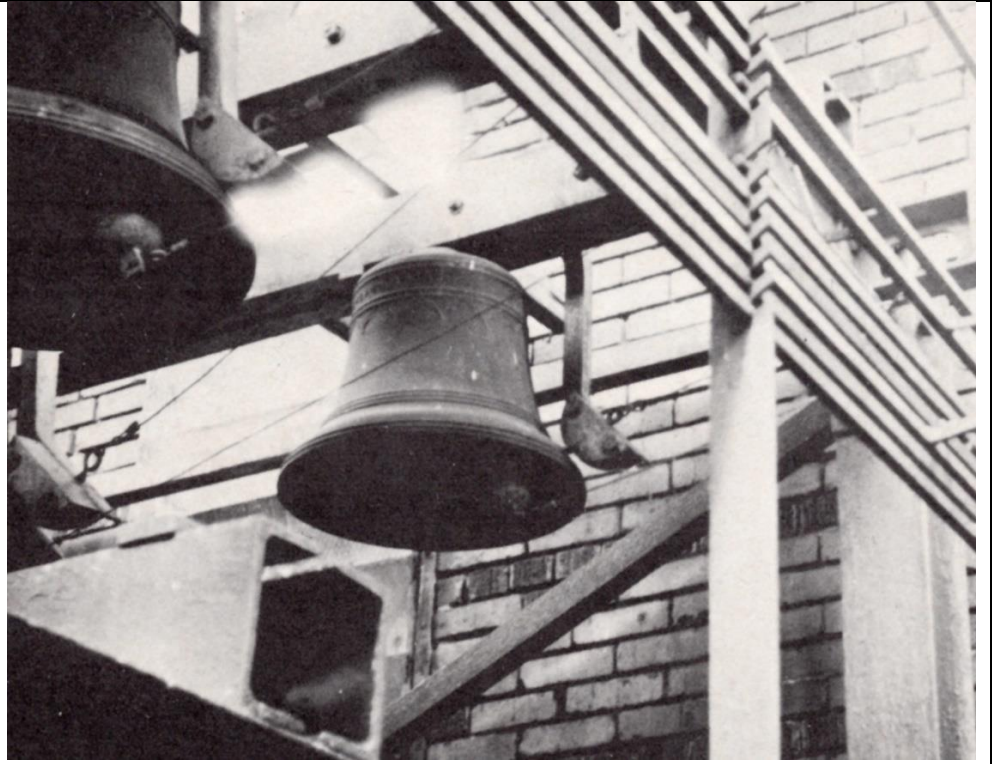
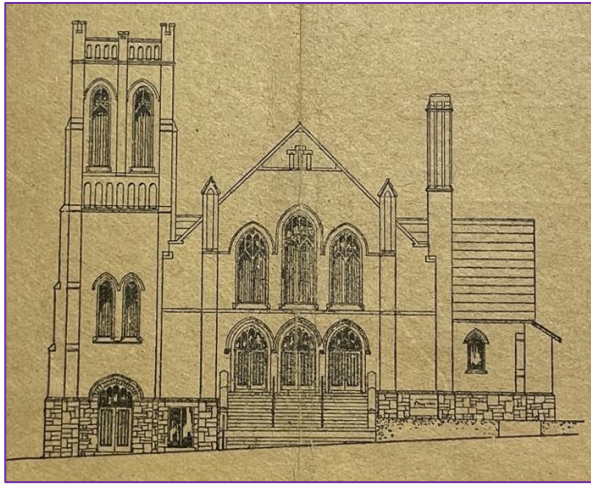


A CONTEMPLATIVE GUIDE TO THE WINDOWS AT ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, WEST TORONTO

Full details about St. John's windows available via: sjwt.ca/windows



THE BELLS OF ST. JOHN'S



On Easter Sunday, April 20, 1924, the St. John's neighborhood was treated to the melodious music of a carillon of 10 bells. The 3rd St. John's church included a belltower, but funds for the bells were unavailable when the building opened

In March 1924, thanks to donations from parishioners, T.W. Chadburn and A.A. Jackson, the bells were purchased from the bell foundry of Gillett and Johnston in Croyden, England.

CARILLON OF BELLS WILL RING ON EASTER

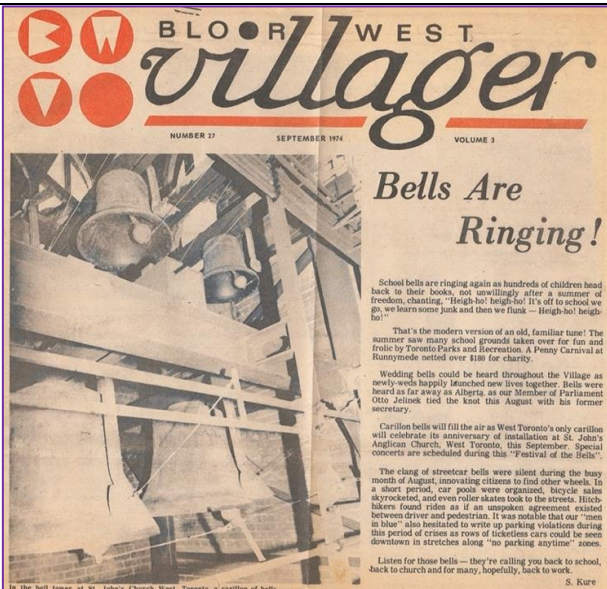
St. John's Anglican Church, West Toronto, Installing Chimes

TO BE DEDICATED APRIL 27

A carillon of bells will ring out for the first time on Easter Sunday from St. John's Anglican Church, West Toronto, of which Rev. R. MacNamara is rector.

The Globe, March 31, 1924

The first ringing of St. John's bells was big news, *The Globe* reporting other churches congratulated St. John's rector



St. John's 10-bell carillon remained a distinctive feature of its Humberstone home, and of the city, for many years.

The popularity of St. John's bells peaked in 1974. *The Bloor West Villager* included a feature, "Bells Are Ringing!" with news that "Carillon bells will fill the air as West Toronto's only carillon will celebrate its anniversary of installation at St. John's Anglican Church, West Toronto, this September. Special concerts are scheduled during the 'Festival of the Bells'."

MELODIOUS CHIMES RING OUT DOXOLOGY

New St. John's Anglican Church Scene of Interesting Ceremony

CANON CODY PREACHES

West Toronto is the richer for the beautiful chime of bells installed in the tower of St. John's Anglican Church. At their dedication yester-

The Globe, April 28, 1924

By the late 1990s, the bells no longer rang due to weakening support structures and were ultimately sold to the diocese as heritage items and removed in May 2005



ORGAN LEGACIES

The powerful sound of St. John's organ and the story of its evolution in the church's current Humberside home over the last century is closely linked with the parish's previous home, as well as with several other churches

For most of St. John's history, the organ was central to church services. While the organ is used less frequently today, it is a special treat to the ears when it is played



THE SECOND CHURCH
Opened Sunday, 26th January, 1890, by the Right Rev. Arthur Sweatman,
Bishop of Toronto.

Much of the mechanism of St. John's organ can be traced to the pipe organ built by the Lye Organ Company of Toronto and installed in St. John's 2nd church and then moved to Humberside in 1923.

Moving the organ was overseen by C. Frank Legge, a member of the parish, who also managed its subsequent maintenance and modifications

The most substantive rebuilt of St. John's pipe organ was undertaken in 1947, using the old pipes and case work, but with new working parts.



The Organ and Chancel Furnishings, installed in 1946 - 1947, are to the Glory of God, and in Sacred Memory of Members of St. John's Church, who offered their lives in the cause of world freedom and peace in the war, 1939 - 45. Given by the congregation and through the bequest of Louise Forsythe, wife of Frank Forsythe, a faithful member of this congregation until her death in April 1945.

In 1950, the organ console was moved from the right to the left side at the back wall of the Chancel

In 1953, a set of Trumpet pipes were added, then 16-foot Trombone pipes

Between 1960 and 1980 several other components added



PERCY WICKER MACDONALD

Percy Wicker MacDonald served as organist from 1923 to 1963

In 1995-96, further renewal of the organ began with the hiring of James Bailey as Music Director, who worked with organ-builder, Alan Jackson

In 2000, an anonymous donation funded the replacement of the organ console, which was installed in a prominent position, closer to the nave altar



RENEWING A CONCERTS LEGACY

On February 18, 2023, St. John's renewed its legacy as an acoustically and artistically attractive space to host musical concerts of many types

Piano Concert

featuring Oliver Peart

February 18th, 2023 @ 7:30pm

St. John's Anglican Church
288 Humberside Avenue

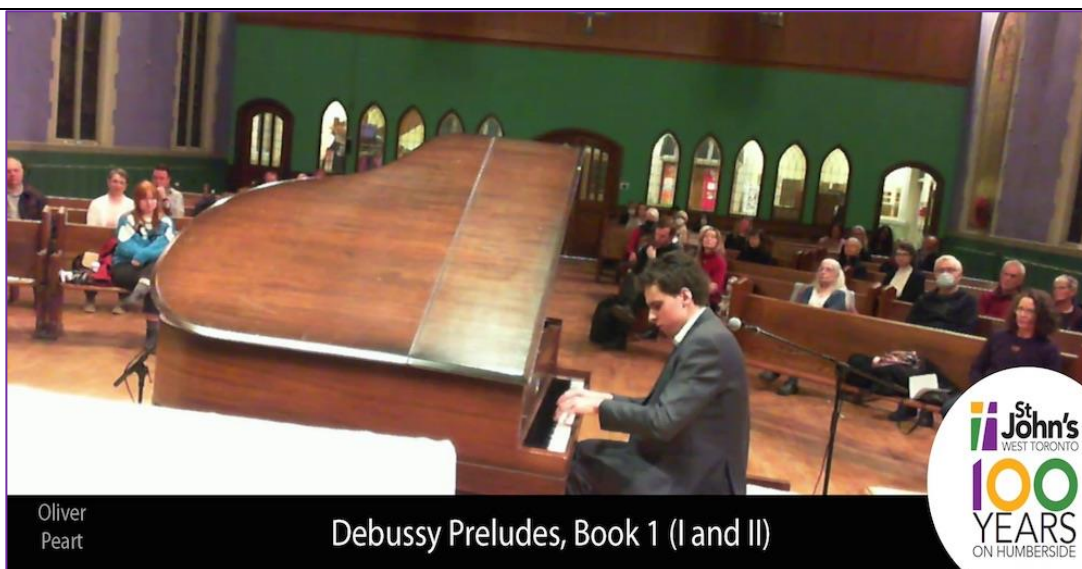


Enjoy a night of classical music and pay what you can!



The classical piano concert by local pianist, Oliver Peart, resonated historically with an ambitious series of concerts St. John's hosted from 1995 through 2002

The concert series originated soon after James Bailey hired as parish organist and Director of Music in 1995



Oliver Peart

Debussy Preludes, Book 1 (I and II)



Idea was sparked through contact with Tim Dawson of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and also involved with music groups with links to various charitable causes.

The concerts:

- Generate funds for St. John's musical program
- Bring new faces into church
- Provide community event and performance opportunities for local musicians

Music at St. John's: Concerts with a Cause
St. John's Anglican Church,
288 Humberside Avenue, Toronto
Mailing Address: R.R. 1, Grafton K0K 2G0
Phone: 416 763-2393
Artistic Director: Timothy Dawson

Producing fine concerts in the Bloor West Village area for six years, and known city-wide for its atmosphere and acoustics, St. John's has hosted many fine musicians, including members of the TSO (including conductor Jukka Pekka Saraste who traded baton for violin to play with the Bach Consort at St. John's.

Lifting spirits through music is one goal of **Concerts with a Cause**; another is raising funds and awareness for deserving community organizations. Attend a concert, and you'll be supporting groups like University Settlement House Music & Arts School, Camphill Village Ontario, the Early Enrichment Daycare, HAADD (adults with autism), and the church itself.

Whole Note, Oct. 1, 1999

Introducing the first in our 2000/2001 series of "Concerts with a Cause"

Music at St. John's 00/01
www.toronto.anglican.ca/parish/stjohns/concert.html

Lori Gemmell, harpist

The Rhapsody of the Harp

Sunday
November 5 at 3 p.m.

St. John's Anglican Church
West Toronto
288 Humberside Avenue
(Between High Park & Quebec Avenues)
By T.T.C. - High Park Subway Station,
then north to Humberside

Lori will be a contestant in the 14th International Harpists' Contest in Israel in late November 2000. Preview her concert with us!

Tickets: Adult: \$12
Student/Senior: \$10
Child: \$5

For more information or to reserve tickets, call (416) 763-2393

"DOWNTOWN MUSICAL QUALITY AT NEIGHBOURHOOD PRICES!"

"Concert with a Cause" proceeds shared with: HAAD, which supported adults with autism; Campbell Village Ontario, a community for adults with disabilities; the Early Enrichment Daycare in St. John's basement; Just Us, an outreach program for prisoners at the Don Jail.

St. John's found that "artists and groups are beginning to seek us out, rather than the other way around."

20 years later, it was Oliver Peart who approached St. John's looking for a welcoming place to hold a concert.

PARISH PARTNERSHIPS

St. John's has built partnerships with several organizations over its 100-year history on HumberSide, sharing and supporting the resources of the building, while providing vital services and supports to the community.

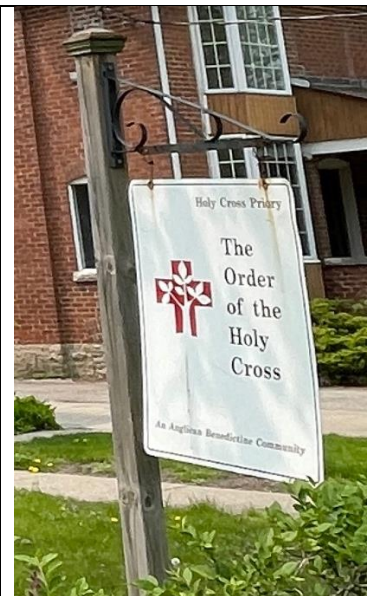


The most significant of St. John's partnerships is with the Early Enrichment Daycare, which opened in the basement of 288 HumberSide on Nov 1989



St. John's longest ongoing partnership has been with the Girl Guides of Canada, which began in 1939. Today, St. John's is home to the 47th Toronto Sparks, and the 12th Toronto Brownies, Guides, and Pathfinders

St. John's also had a long partnership with the 7th Toronto Boy Scouts Troop, from 1909 to 1984



St. John's has maintained a long partnership with the Order of the Holy Cross, based next door



Another group with a long partnership with St. John's has been Alcoholics Anonymous, which began in 1986 as the Etobicoke Group and then the High Park Group, which it continues as today. The AA High Park Group meets at St. John's on Friday and Sunday evenings

THE STORY OF THE COLOURS

Purple, Yellow & Green!

Really? For the interior of a Church?

Really!



Saturday
May 11, 2002
2 - 11 pm

St. John's
Anglican Church,
West Toronto

288 Humberside Avenue
(across from Humberside Collegiate,
between High Park Avenue and Quebec
Avenue, 2 blocks north of the High Park
subway station)
416-763-2393
www.sjw1.ca



One of the most significant developments in St. John's history has been the installation of the vibrant colours on its walls.

Since the colours debut in May 2002, St. John's has been described as the "technicolor church" or the "Easter Church"

A splash of colour Parish stirs to life

By Carolyn Purdon

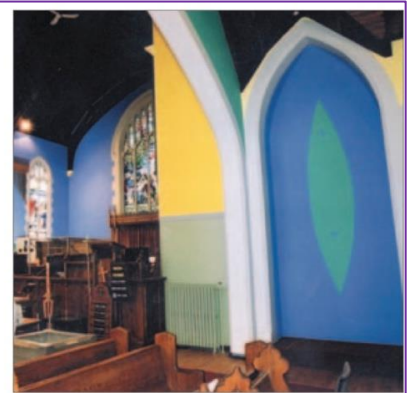
We are not a beige congregation,"

With these words, the congregation of St. John's, West Toronto last year began defining itself through a palette of colours that has resulted in a glorious rebirth of the church's interior.

Painted in purplish-blue,

St. John's building. When the plan went to the two vestries for a vote, however, St. John's approved the union but St. Paul's turned it down.

After the decision, St. John's parishioners were tired and dispirited, says Mr. Van der Meer. "A lot of energy had gone into making (the amalgamation) come about," he explains.



The Anglican, June 2002, p. 1

"The process of coming to these colours happened within the existing community of people at St. John's. The place was looking shabby. Someone made the comment, 'We are not a beige congregation.'"

St. John's congregation are:

- A transforming community
- Easter people
- Risk-oriented
- In dialogue with our tradition
- Engaged in the issues of our day

St. John's called upon Stuart Reid, a stained-glass artist and professor of colour theory, for guidance. "What kind of feelings do you want to evoke about being in this space? What can the building tell the community about who you are and what happens here?"

The process of colouring St. John's was driven by harmonizing the church's interior with the key colours that connected the stained-glass windows, purple, yellow, and green, and which reflected the parish's identity

The colouring of St. John's concluded a period of major change for the parish that began in the 1980s:

- Adoption of Book of Alternative Service
- Move of Altar close to the congregation
- Lay involvement in services
- Movable pews to facilitate engagement



To further explore St. John's history on Humberside, visit: sjwt.ca/blog

Thank you for coming to visit us

Further explore St. John's 100 years on Humberside at sjwt.ca/100th

St. John's West Toronto

100TH ANNIVERSARY

at 288 Humberside Avenue

Explore Our Past

Articles

Articles about the 100th Anniversary

Newsletters

from the past

Odds & Ends

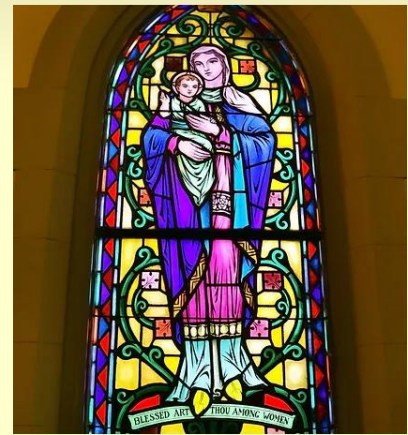
Documents and Photos



THE BUILDING



THE COLOURS



THE WINDOWS



THE PEOPLE



THE ORGAN



THE CARILLON

St. John's 100th Team has collected and curated an enormous amount of information dating back to the opening of our current Humberside home in 1923, as well as back to the birth of the St. John's parish in 1881.

Explore our 100th anniversary website and learn the story of this historic building, its place in the community, and of its people over the past century.



During 2023, St. John's West Toronto is celebrating its 100th year on Humberside Ave., the third church in the parish's history. The first St. John's church opened on Nov. 20, 1881, at the intersection of Dundas St. West and St. John's Road. The cornerstone for the second St. John's church was laid next to the first on May 11, 1889. The move of the parish to 288 Humberside began with the laying of a cornerstone on May 5, 1923, and the opening of the third church on Nov. 4, 1923. The full history of St. John's is represented in its cornerstone.

