



Christ Church St James Anglican Church

Parish Profile 2023

A Parish in the Diocese of Toronto Anglican Church of Canada



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Executive Summary

Jesus commanded us to love one another and the congregation at Christ Church St James (CCSJ) really takes that to heart. Ours is a healthy, vibrant and welcoming parish in the middle of a growing and changing community in south Etobicoke.

Jesus said we were to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit prisoners, welcome strangers and to pray. We have that strong missional focus, something that is evident in the multiple outreach activities that the congregation is engaged in. Our food pantry, for example, serves hundreds of families each month. We sponsor refugees and assist government sponsored refugees with clothing and kitchenware. Our Meal to Keele initiative and support for Restorative Justice aids prisoners and those recently released. Other responses to Christ's call are detailed later in this text.

Many of our ministries focus on evangelism while others have a social justice emphasis. We also believe in the importance of fostering Christian discipleship among the laity, and so many of our activities reflect that. Above all, we strive to be Christ-centred, both in our worship and in our activities.

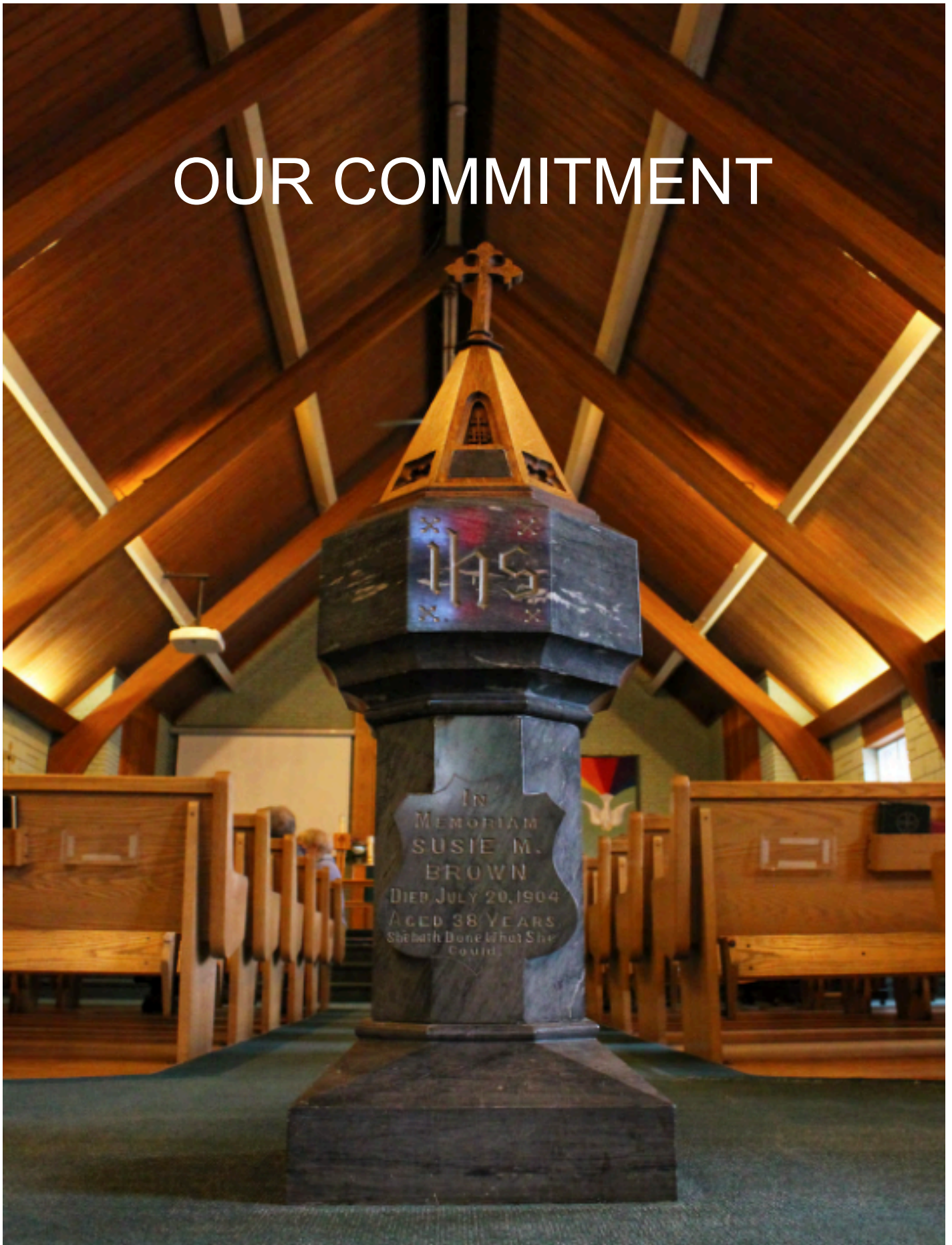
While we are blessed with a spirit of unity and a sense of common purpose, we are aware that many challenges face us as we go forward. There is no room for complacency. The rapidly changing landscape of our neighbourhood offers us new opportunities for outreach. The increased diversity within the parish presents us with new challenges. We also see the need for discipling and integrating those who are new into the community.

There is a lot going on at CCSJ and a potential incumbent might find that a bit overwhelming but they will have the benefit and support from wise, experienced leadership in the church and in those lay leaders who run the various ministries

We wish to build on the strengths that are already evident in the parish. These include a missional ethos, a strong leadership team, a committed and engaged laity, and a visionary approach. Our desire is truly to be the body of Christ in our neighbourhood and to be in step with where the Spirit is leading us.

In order to do this we're looking for an incumbent who feels a strong calling to serve in a community such as ours. Together we believe that we can discern God's will for our future and grow deeper in our worship and service.

OUR COMMITMENT



Our Mission Statement

We are seeking to be a caring, compassionate, welcoming family of God in Jesus Christ whose Mission is:

1. Bringing People to Jesus

Work through the power of the Holy Spirit to bring new members of all ages and backgrounds to Christ and to his Church

2. Growing as Disciples

Encourage life-long growth in Christian discipleship

3. Caring for Others

Care and advocate for the lonely and marginalised

4. Pastoral Care

Provide pastoral care for the church family

5. Deeper In Worship

Go deeper in our worship of God through both existing and innovative forms of worship.

Bringing People to Jesus

Work through the power of the Holy Spirit to bring new members of all ages and backgrounds to Christ and to his Church.



Under the leadership of our Missional Coordinator, CCSJ has a number of initiatives intended to allow seekers easy access to opportunities to encounter Jesus. Several of these informal gatherings are situated outside the church buildings, such as Lakeshore Cafe (in a coffee shop) and God, Coffee & Me (in a restaurant).

Within the church building, Celebration Café is offered regularly – a service of praise music, drama presentations, prayer and conversation. Messy Church, offered monthly, allows families to share in thematic crafts, games, music and Bible stories – culminating in a community meal provided by members of the congregation.

A number of the outreach initiatives (covered in a later section), provide ideal settings for volunteers to model Christian kindness and generosity, and to provide a listening ear, opportunity for prayer, and often an invitation to attend one of the accessible programs mentioned above.

If you would like to hear from someone as to why they have joined our missional Café Church, just click this [link](#).

Growing As Disciples

Encourage life-long growth in Christian discipleship.

CCSJ is committed to the spiritual growth of its members. The church offers a wide variety of opportunities for learning and growing as disciples. The Sunday morning sermon plays an important role in this regard.



There are also a number of services/studies that happen throughout the week - such as a regular Thursday morning Bible study, occasional Wednesday night studies, Alpha courses, small groups, retreats, men's breakfasts, women's ministry (Celebrating Women), children's and youth ministries. Workshops and studies on different topics are held from time to time. We also encourage people to take advantage of events (lectures, women's breakfasts etc.) at theological Colleges.

The church has an excellent library which is a great resource for learning. It occupies a prominent spot in the foyer. In today's digital world, we have purchased for all of our parishioners, and even for their friends, access to one of the world's largest collections of online Bible material: [Right Now Media](#).

We also publish a monthly newsletter entitled "Walking in the Way" which along with parish news, contains teaching and testimonials.

If you would like to hear from a couple who recently joined CCSJ as to what they found and why they stayed, click this [link](#).

Caring for Others

Care for the lonely and marginalised.

You can hear the heartbeat of Gospel-centred love here when we reach out to those in need. During the Covid 19 Pandemic, when all were quarantined, a group of concerned parishioners joined with Church leaders to create Encircled In Care, in order to reach out to those living alone to sustain Hope and Faith. Through regular telephone contact and small, specialised gift bags, created to mark secular and Church holidays that were delivered by the team to homes, we sought to keep our community connected, supported and made to feel they were loved, valued and missed by our Church family.



Use of social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube and Zoom kept isolated individuals connected to services and teaching, and provided opportunities for requests for prayer and support. These internet platforms continue to be used for those who are ill, unable to travel or out of town.

The Food Pantry found ways to reorganise and deliver groceries to the skyrocketing number of those who found themselves in need throughout the pandemic. Today, more than 200 families

are assisted each time the pantry is open. All was made possible by continued financial support from community partners, and by a generous congregation who saw the overwhelming need and made additional contributions through a fund we called The Covid Cup, to support those facing financial hardship because they had lost a job or were facing distress in other ways.

In the end, we emerged a connected, committed and strong community.

As in person society re-emerged, we have resumed our physical outreach to the isolated and marginalised. Our prison ministry has restarted with the Keele Correctional Centre, with monthly homemade or purchased meals provided, and fellowship delivered by a committed team of 15, who meet, eat and pray with the prisoners. Support extends after release through work with three Restorative Justice homes in the neighbourhood. Some of the men living there have become dedicated volunteers at the Food Pantry and have assisted with our Community Sizzler celebration held each May and also frequent Café Church and special events.

[Fight4Freedom](#) extends gifts and kindness to the women caught in the sex trade.

A team of 16 prepares hundreds of sandwiches and dozens of muffins every two weeks that are distributed through the [Dale Ministry](#) in Parkdale to those living on the street. Often included in deliveries are warm clothing, personal care items and in-person prayers. A Christmas holiday meal for 120 is cooked, packaged and delivered along with a few joyous voices that join in with carolling. And clients of the Dale have been warmly welcomed to our Pancake Supper.

The Housing Committee began in 2022 . Its purpose is to seek ways that we can live our Gospel values in assisting those experiencing homelessness and precarious housing. It has advocated for unhoused folks within our parish as well as with local, provincial and federal government representatives, and led community educational sessions with our ecumenical partners on the importance of speaking out to support warming centres and housing for those without homes. Two members are part of the Diocesan Housing Committee. Last winter we were actively engaged in caring for an unhoused person who was camped out in our cemetery, taking care to ensure he was sheltered in a motel during the coldest nights of the year.

Our Refugee Committee has privately sponsored three families in the past six years. The success of those families as they settle into Canada is a source of great joy to all. Recently we have also aided government refugees and asylum seekers temporarily housed in a local motel with practical assistance to feed and clothe themselves through our Food Bank, Emergency Kit distribution and winter clothing distribution.

If you would care to hear from one of our Food Bank leaders about what this work means to her, click this [link](#).

Pastoral Care

Provide pastoral care for the church family.



There are many diverse people in the Lord's kingdom and many different needs to be met in caring for them. At Christ Church St James, pastoral care is varied, supported by lay ministries and guided by the commandment to love one another as brothers and sisters.

Clergy are supported by a small team of lay visitors who visit the ill, home bound and grieving to offer personal support, comfort and Holy Communion. Food is prepared and delivered for elderly members who need the nourishment of

both food and a friendly visit.

The Prayer Team takes requests for intercession and prays together twice a month and individually as needs arise to provide that confidential support to all. Prayer requests are also taken over the Internet from people all over the world and responded to with compassion.

A group of committed knitters meets regularly to pray and create beautiful prayer shawls for those who are ill or lonely so that they can feel the physical warmth of support of Christ's family. Others join in a healing ministry to pray for the restorative touch of the Lord on those who are suffering.

And one caring soul has taken on a personal ministry of sending greeting cards on behalf of the parish to all parishioners to mark seasonal celebrations and remind them of the love of God in their midst.

If you are interested in hearing from a parishioner volunteer on what encourages her to do this, click this [link](#).

Deeper In Worship

Go deeper in our worship of God through both existing and innovative forms of worship.



Worshipping God together as followers of Jesus Christ strengthens our commitment and relationship to Him and our common bond with each other as Christian siblings. While Sunday is our main worship day, this is not the only time we publically worship God. We intentionally have additional worship services throughout the year, as the Holy Spirit leads.

Celebration Café is held once a month led by Bruce Smith, our Missional Coordinator. Along with worship and prayer, this service involves contemporary praise songs, some short directed content, and discussion.

Messy Church is a non-traditional service held once a month in the church (basement) hall. It involves family participation in crafts with a biblical connection, praise music, and is followed by a hot meal at no cost to participants.

The congregation is very interested in experiencing other creative forms of Christ-centred worship including drama, liturgical dance, testimonials, etc.

How Covid moved Worship Technology Forward and Kept Us Connected

Covid 19 stopped in-person worship in March 2020. If we were going to survive as a community, we needed some sort of remote, electronic worship; how to do this was the question.

Creative innovation was the answer. CCSJ started by recording modified two-person led services using a parishioner's SLR camera. These videos were edited and posted to the church's new [YouTube channel](#) and links were sent using a new weekly email system.

In June, 2020, the Diocese suggested that we use Zoom. The Corporation purchased an account and the Diocese paid for the first month of service as. A PowerPoint slideshow service was developed and "broadcast" on Zoom on Sunday mornings. The audio and video weren't perfect, but parishioners could watch and participate live. We continued pre-recorded services using two more parishioner's SLR cameras and a borrowed lighting rig. Editing the footage gave us multi-camera coverage from different angles. We added a virtual choir session that could be recorded remotely in each person's

house – the finished, edited product was posted to YouTube and used in the slideshow services Sunday mornings. Parishioners thought we were quite sophisticated!

In the fall of 2020, we had a partial re-opening with very limited seating for infection control reasons. So live streaming on some platform was again essential. We experimented with one camera and tried streaming on YouTube. This was unsatisfactory due to the higher barriers to participation. We then went to Zoom streaming. With Reach Grant funding from the Diocese, we began to purchase equipment – a video switcher, cabling, and a pan-tilt-zoom camera to augment the two parishioner-owned SLR cameras.

If it appeals to you to hear from the children themselves about what Messy Church means to them, click this [link](#).

Our Resources

Our Tradition

Christ Church St James is the result of an amalgamation, by unanimous vote, of the two parishes, Christ Church Mimico and St James Humber Bay.



The two parishes of Christ Church, Mimico and St James, Humber Bay each have their own illustrious history. They are not unlinked, since St James was a daughter church established as a missional initiative by Christ Church in 1891 – before being reunited in the above-mentioned amalgamation more than 125 years later.

No one knows the exact date in which Christ Church Mimico was officially established, but based on church records, the year 1827 is

when the first set of baptisms were recorded. In 1832 the congregation decided to build the first church in Mimico.

A more complete history of both parishes can be found at <https://www.christchurchstjames.ca>

Since the amalgamation established CCSJ in 2010, a spirit of commitment and excitement has resulted in an evangelical congregation with outstanding leadership which has committed itself to Christ's calling, has added capacity to enhance its neighbourhood outreach, and under a new incumbent is hopeful to reach new heights of service.

Our Buildings

A recent building project has increased capacity for our foodbank and other outreach programs, has provided an attractive and useful air conditioned foyer, nursery, and office area, and has enabled a ministry of hospitality, as well as greatly enhancing the church's curb appeal.

Our Church



The worship area at CCSJ reasonably accommodates around 165 to 175 people, although with judicious use of folding chairs, fitted into whatever space is available, we have been known to seat 250 for some special occasions. Even 150 people, however, can make it difficult for newcomers to find available seating without having to squeeze past someone at the end of a pew

– and since over the past several years, we have often seen that level of attendance, there are plans to free up additional space (now occupied by retired organ pipes and the like) to add capacity.

The layout presently features the altar and the font, as both are the centrepieces of circles around which the community gathers. Communion kneelers encircle the altar, so that 35 to 40 can receive communion together – before yielding their places to the next circle of recipients. Similarly the font sits in the aisle in the middle of the congregation, with enough space to allow baptisms to be quite special, with any number of children occupying the immediate area.

The air conditioned glass enclosed foyer, nursery, and office areas are immediately adjacent to the worship space. Downstairs the spacious Parish Hall allows for any number of parish and neighbourhood programs – food bank, parish dinners (180 seats), Scouts and Guides, coffee hours, Messy Church, etc. Serving this area is a renovated stainless-steel kitchen.

There are also half a dozen meeting rooms/classrooms as well as a very large space dedicated to accommodating storage (including 8 or 9 refrigerators/freezers) for the food bank

Our Rectory



Built in the late 1950s around the same time as the Church itself, the rectory sits on the same plot of land, but immediately south of the Church.

It has a pleasant outside appearance (as demonstrated by the included photo) with trees gracing the front and back yards. The backyard grades downward toward the bluffs behind – gradually at first, and eventually more steeply. There is a large walkout deck at the back which looks out on this view.

There are three bedrooms upstairs, and one that can be used for that purpose, or another, downstairs in the finished basement.

The main floor has a large living room/dining room as well as a recently refreshed kitchen from which one can walk out on the deck. There are washrooms upstairs and in the basement. As is the case in many parishes, when the incumbent would prefer a housing allowance rather than live in the rectory, we have then rented the house to help cover the cost of the housing allowance. Recently we have experienced both situations, depending on circumstances.

Our Cemetery

Christ Church St James Cemetery, a historical site under the Ontario Heritage Act, is located at 329 Royal York Road in Etobicoke. The cemetery was opened in 1827, and there are still headstones in the cemetery dating back to 1832.



Historically, Christ Church St James Cemetery reflects the earliest period of settlement at the south end of Etobicoke. It is an important historical reflection of the parish of Christ Church Mimico, which was founded in 1827. As the community of Mimico grew, Christ Church Mimico and its graveyard remained a well-established local landmark.

The cemetery contains the graves of many prominent Etobicoke residents associated with the founding and development of the community. [John William Gamble](#) was buried in the cemetery in 1873. A later burial in 1910, Daniel Fisher Horner was a noted Etobicoke realtor, inventor, businessman and politician. Other notable local families buried at Christ Church St James Cemetery include Appleby, Duck, Hicks, Tremayne, Van Every, Greey and Poole.



The cemetery took its present shape after the 2006 fire that destroyed the third (1956) Christ Church building. An

inventory of graves and the markers shows about 550 burials and 140 markers in the cemetery. Today the Memorial Garden and Cemetery provides a unique parklike urban cemetery space for people who love the community and a peaceful garden for restful contemplation. It serves as a garden and cemetery for the benefit of the people of Mimico and beyond. The cemetery is a part of the church's outreach, providing a point of contact that shows the Anglican Church's deep and lasting commitment to the community.

Our Finances

Our financial records provide clear evidence of the commitment of our congregation to our missional and outreach programs as in the past 4 years, more than \$300,000 in donations, in addition to regular envelope givings, has been contributed and designated for specific needs.



With a parish list of about 200 parishioners, of whom 15% are children and young people, significant commitment is shown in that more than half on average are in attendance each week. This commitment to their faith and to their church is also evident in that there are around 110 regular donors, through various means - whether envelopes, PAR, or by way of

e-Transfers, drawn from the 120 households in the parish.

The number of donors, and the amount regularly given, has increased steadily over the past five or six years, even through the pandemic period when the church building was often closed. Much of this commitment can be attributed to the creativity and energy shown by the talented leadership team that God has drawn to CCSJ.

CCSJ has a tradition of encouraging extra donations, usually designated for the building, for outreach and for poverty alleviation purposes. In the past three years, these designated gifts equaled more than a 50% 'add-on' to the regular offerings.

Special purposes supported over the past twelve months have included our own Food Bank, support for unhoused people through the Dale Ministry, our prison ministry at the Keele, refugee support, our ecumenical outreach at Stonegate Ministry (<stonegateministry.ca>), sending children to summer camp, and others.

With diocesan help we recently completed a \$1 million capital improvement at CCSJ, largely to improve the capacity of our food bank. The church was left with a mortgage of approximately \$100,000. We have been servicing this debt regularly, with occasional lump sum payments, which has reduced the amount to approximately \$30,000.

Our Ministry Leaders

A combination of clerical and lay leadership have augmented the gifts of the incumbent, resulting in the congregation being blessed with opportunities to participate in God's work in the world.

Lay Leaders	Volunteers	Staff
Altar Guild Deputy Wardens Cemetery Board Cemetery Manager Synod Delegates Parish Council Wardens	Children's Ministry Envelope Secretary Food Pantry Cleaners Food Pantry Co-Directors Groundskeeper Hospitality Team Housing Committee Kitchen Coordinators Library Music Leader Newsletter Editor Prayer Chain Prayer Shawl Property Manager Refugee Committee Social Committee Stonegate Representatives Treasurer Volunteer Screening Women's Group Worship Schedule	Honorary Assistants (2) Missional Coordinator Organist Parish Administrator Youth Leader

Leadership in ministry at CCSJ is exercised by a number of gifted people – lay and ordained, paid and volunteer — in support of the work of ministry and our worship at CCSJ.

The incumbent's role is complemented by a Missional Coordinator, a Youth Leader, and two gifted Associate Priests. Our music ministry involves many people, including a paid organist and volunteer music leader. Many of our ministries are lay-led, such as the food bank, which allows our spiritual leaders to engage with the spiritual needs of those being served and as well to support volunteers.

This collegial style of leadership has enabled gifts to surface and be used and has encouraged members to undertake ministry directions of their own. Many capable and committed members have come forward to offer themselves for ministry — all with a focus on serving the Lord.

Our Neighbourhood

Our neighbourhood mission field is a rich mixture of houses, apartments, and condos, each with a wide range of socio-economic circumstances.

CCSJ is located in a residential area consisting mostly of single detached family homes. Immediately to the south is Lakeshore Boulevard West and Humber Bay, which has seen an explosion of high-rise condominium buildings where many residents have beautiful views of the lake and the Toronto skyline. This has resulted in a renewed waterfront with walking and biking paths, parks, recreational facilities, shops and restaurants. The neighbourhood is particularly vibrant during the summer months as people take advantage of the lakefront offerings. Also rapidly expanding are new condominium residences along the Queensway, with five projects currently under construction, and others in planning stages. Ministry to these new residents will create opportunities within the next five years.



Although South Etobicoke as a whole is somewhat more affluent than the average Toronto neighbourhood, there are some low-income pockets, particularly in the Stonegate-Queensway neighbourhood as well as in Mimico. A recent survey found 74.3% of renters here spend more than 30% of their household income on housing, compared with 47% of those who live in Toronto. About 12% of the area's residents are classified as low-income, and include

refugees, asylum seekers and those living on Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program. Rising costs of living, including rents, are posing severe financial challenges to many.

Access to the church is easiest by car. There are TTC buses running along The Queensway as well as Park Lawn Avenue but not with any regularity on Sundays. There have been growing calls for enhanced public transportation in this area. Most parishioners (appr. 80%) drive to the church. Some walk and a small number (appr. 6%) take public transportation.

Our Future

Our New Incumbent

What we are looking for in our new Priest is someone who is:

- Able to feel compassion and love for a congregation and neighbourhood like that described in this profile
- Enjoys sharing leadership in a small team setting with other ministerial leaders
- Able to show Christ to the community because of their own close personal relationship with Jesus
- Comfortable in ministering to a wide range of age, ethnic background, and socio-economic diversity
- Eager to support and grow the missional and outreach ethos of CCSJ
- Able to preach and lead worship in a gospel-centred and accessible manner



Our Challenges

We hesitate to identify only a few areas to highlight as challenges, since there are so many opportunities to expand and go deeper inherent in the 5 main elements of our Mission Statement. Nonetheless, it may be helpful for our prospective new priest to be aware of other edges to our growth that may not have been made apparent in the previous pages.

Some of these are:

- Although we have highlighted some excellent lay leadership which has and continues to benefit CCSJ, we recognize the need to raise up new leaders to supplement these current front line leaders.
- Like many other parishes, we want to find ways to encourage more children and youth to find a home at CCSJ. The pandemic period certainly eroded the numbers of children and young people, but we have seen a growth of these recently. Messy Church also continues to draw new young families. We are looking for ways to integrate them into our community.
- With our experiences with refugees from around the world, and through the missional programs that reach out into the neighbourhood in many forms, CCSJ has evolved into a very diverse congregation – reflected in variations by age, by gender, by ethnic backgrounds, by socio-economic situations, etc. As a result, we want to deliberately take steps to grow the capacity of these individuals to enable our leadership to become more representative of this parish diversity.
- We have been fortunate to have a unique and talented team of spiritual leaders who together have enriched our faith and stirred our hearts. The challenge is for a priest to eagerly lead this team, and facilitate their current ministries while also providing them, and the congregation as a whole, with new directions to further the glory of God.
- After much parish consideration and collaboration, the congregation voted keenly to create additional space in our worship area to accommodate newcomers and reduce the overcrowding which has occurred. This process slowed in the pandemic period but we are eager to ‘pick up the pace’ in due course.
- As indicated elsewhere in the Profile, our neighbourhood has a diverse and rapidly changing landscape. For many years its two main features were a large number of single family dwellings plus an apartment area which has many economically deprived individuals and



families. In recent years however, to these have been added an increasing number of condominiums, especially along the waterfront. This brings an interesting challenge of how to bring the Gospel into the lives of those who occupy those new imposing structures.

Our Hope for the Future

We believe that God has an exciting future planned for Christ Church St James, and that this plan includes a visionary leader to guide and inspire us.



We understand that those considering this position will have many other options for following their call to ministry – we merely ask that you prayerfully consider CCSJ.

As we go forth in our journey as Christians, we hope that our Incumbent will walk alongside us as we continue in our ministries to best exemplify Jesus's teachings. We hope that our incumbent will help us to shed light on new paths for us to walk together while providing support to our existing outreach ministries.

In preparing this Profile, we have attempted to provide the information that might be needed, in a manner that does not overwhelm, but is sufficient to give a good sense of the parish. Anything significant that we have missed we hope can be supplied through other elements in the selection process.