

# Parish Profile



Holy Trinity Church Thornhill  
December 2022

# Table of Contents

1. Our Future Vision and Our New Priest .....	4
2. History .....	6
3. Worship, Liturgy, and Music .....	7
4. Learning and Spiritual Nurture and Development.....	9
5. Mutual Support and Fellowship .....	9
6. COVID 19 and the Increase in Technology.....	11
7. Pastoral Care .....	14
8. Human, Financial, and Physical Resources .....	15
9. Our Community and Our Mission .....	18
In Conclusion .....	22
Appendices .....	23

## Appendices

- I. **Our History**
- II. **2021 Vestry Report**
- III. **2021 Audited Financial Statements**
- IV. **2022 Budget**
- V. **Parish Selection Committee Survey Results**
- VI. **Reimagining Holy Trinity 2030**

## Our Mission Statement

**We are a vibrant, welcoming Christian community  
flourishing in God's love through fellowship,  
outreach, worship, and spiritual growth,  
in an atmosphere of compassion and mutual respect.**

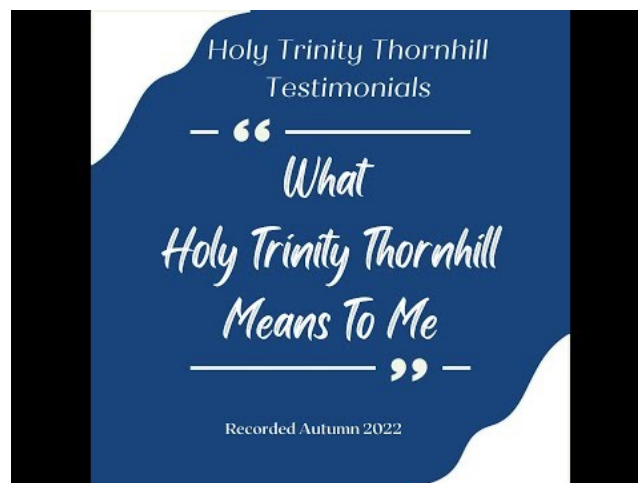
This is the current Mission Statement for Holy Trinity Church, and a vision to which we aspire. Throughout our recent processes of discernment – Reimagining, surveys, and focus groups – parishioners have consistently returned to this mission statement as the best expression of our dreams and vision. The Mission Statement provides the frame of reference for the rest of our Parish Profile.

## 1. Our Future Vision and Our New Priest

We are an historic church providing an inspiring and comforting place of Anglican worship, a home for fellowship, and help and comfort for our neighbours experiencing hardship. **As we approach our 200th anniversary, we seek a new priest who will work collaboratively with us to reach a shared vision of a healthy, vibrant future.**

**Our congregation has many expressions of our understanding of God and the role of Jesus in our lives.** Some seek to deepen their faith through Biblical study and interpretation, reflection, or prayer; others find a sense of peace and serenity in the liturgy, the hymns, and a sense of “being in God’s house.” Still others find their faith in fellowship and acts of service both inside and outside the church.

### *Reflection: John Carrington on Faith*



We will continue to be open and welcoming to newcomers and to new ideas, and to pursue ways to enhance this openness. Like many other churches, our congregation has declined in numbers over the years. We hope to reach a broader and more diverse audience with a wider array of church services and opportunities to participate in the life of our parish and community. We have attracted several younger families recently, and **we plan to build on this trend because we understand that change and renewal will grow our church.**

We welcome our rapidly changing neighbourhood. We know that we need to venture out into our community to better understand what the community really needs, and how we can better be of service. ***“Give to everyone who asks you for something ... do for others what you want them to do for you.”***

We would like to continue to offer a variety of worship services that appeal to both traditional and modern taste. **We wish for a priest who is a powerful**

**communicator, able to make the scripture relevant to our daily lives** and, as we read in Matthew 7.28 - *“the crowds were amazed at his teachings”* – come and amaze us with the promise of Jesus!

Since the start of COVID, **we have used technology extensively to engage with parishioners, achieve a balanced budget, and maintain a high level of outreach contributions.**

***We discovered new ways of providing services and meeting together and look to make even better use of technology in the future.***

**We enjoy spiritual growth and fulfillment** in our early morning daily devotions group, the weekly Bible study group and other Christian education initiatives, many of which are led by lay people. This not only helps with the workload on clergy; it also creates a comfortable peer-based venue for the exchange of views and discussion.

There will be a continuing need to offer enhanced pastoral care going forward. We need to find a way to heal ourselves and provide the care that many of us will require in the future. We have a Wellness Committee and plan to hire a Parish Nurse again. Parishioners have also indicated that sometimes they want to talk to our priest about pastoral care issues and not to our lay team. **We trust that our new priest will share our vision of the importance of pastoral care and see it as a priority.**

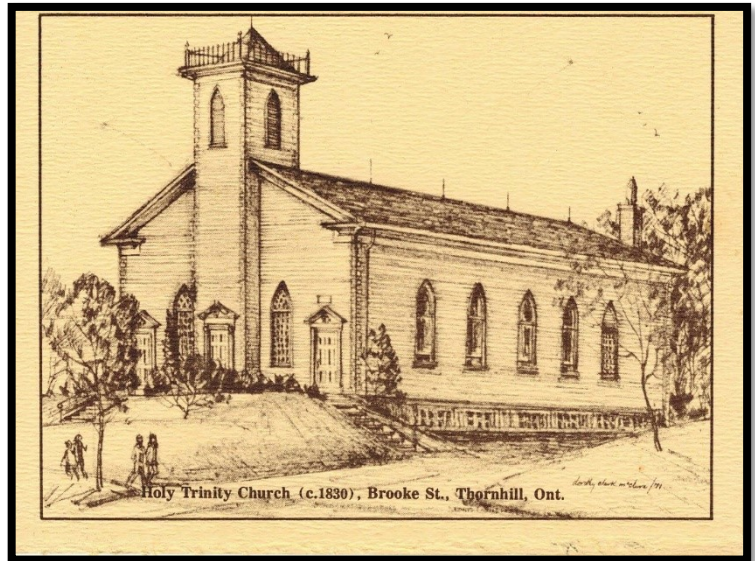
Like many parishes and institutions today, we wrestle with issues of negativity, discrimination, and verbal abuse. We have started to learn how to name and manage these issues through our recent Reimaging Project, and later, with a series on *Race and Diversity*, and the development of a Code of Conduct. **While difficult to measure, more than a few parishioners have recently commented that they sense a new positive spirit in the parish; we continue to try and build on that spirit.**

We do not expect our new priest to come in and do all that needs to be done single-handedly. Fortunately, we have a history of strong lay leadership and an extensive volunteer support base in our parish. We believe that by working together with our new priest we will meet our challenges, grasp our opportunities, and become all that God wants us to be.

***In Summary, we seek a new priest who is an inspiring preacher and spiritual leader; dedicated to ensuring timely and sensitive pastoral care; missional towards the large community; comfortable with using technology and open and collaborative in dealing with volunteers and lay leaders at Holy Trinity.***

## 2. History

Trinity Church, (as it was originally called), was established in 1830. Today it is the oldest original church building still in use in the Diocese of Toronto. The church was built in Thornhill at the top of the North hill on the West side of Yonge Street, and the cemetery remains there. Seeking a larger, quieter site, it was decided in 1950 to relocate the church. The church was painstakingly taken apart, board by board, moved down the hill, and re-erected at its present location on Brooke St. Over time a parish hall with a large auditorium was added. Renovations have occurred to that hall and associated spaces, but the actual sanctuary remains largely untouched.



**THE OLDEST ORIGINAL CHURCH BUILDING STILL IN USE IN  
THE DIOCESE OF TORONTO**

Over the years, successive congregations have made notable accomplishments. These include the establishment of an Endowment Fund in 1980; the sponsorship of and involvement in a non-profit housing project in 1988; the creation of the position of Parish Nurse in 1996; the founding of Holy Trinity School in 1981, which began with 66 students in the church basement, and today has blossomed into a highly regarded K to 12 school situated on 37 acres in Richmond Hill, and the development of a “green team” in 2015, which, by 2018 had become a climate change leader and model in York Region. Throughout the years there has been a growing understanding of the importance of outreach, and this has become a key part of who we are.

Several difficult challenges occurred during the past 190 years, including at least two economic depressions, four pandemics (including the current one), two World Wars, and the moving and re-building of the church. The issues of renovation and maintenance of an historic building, the installation of a new organ, and an accessibility lift were also addressed.

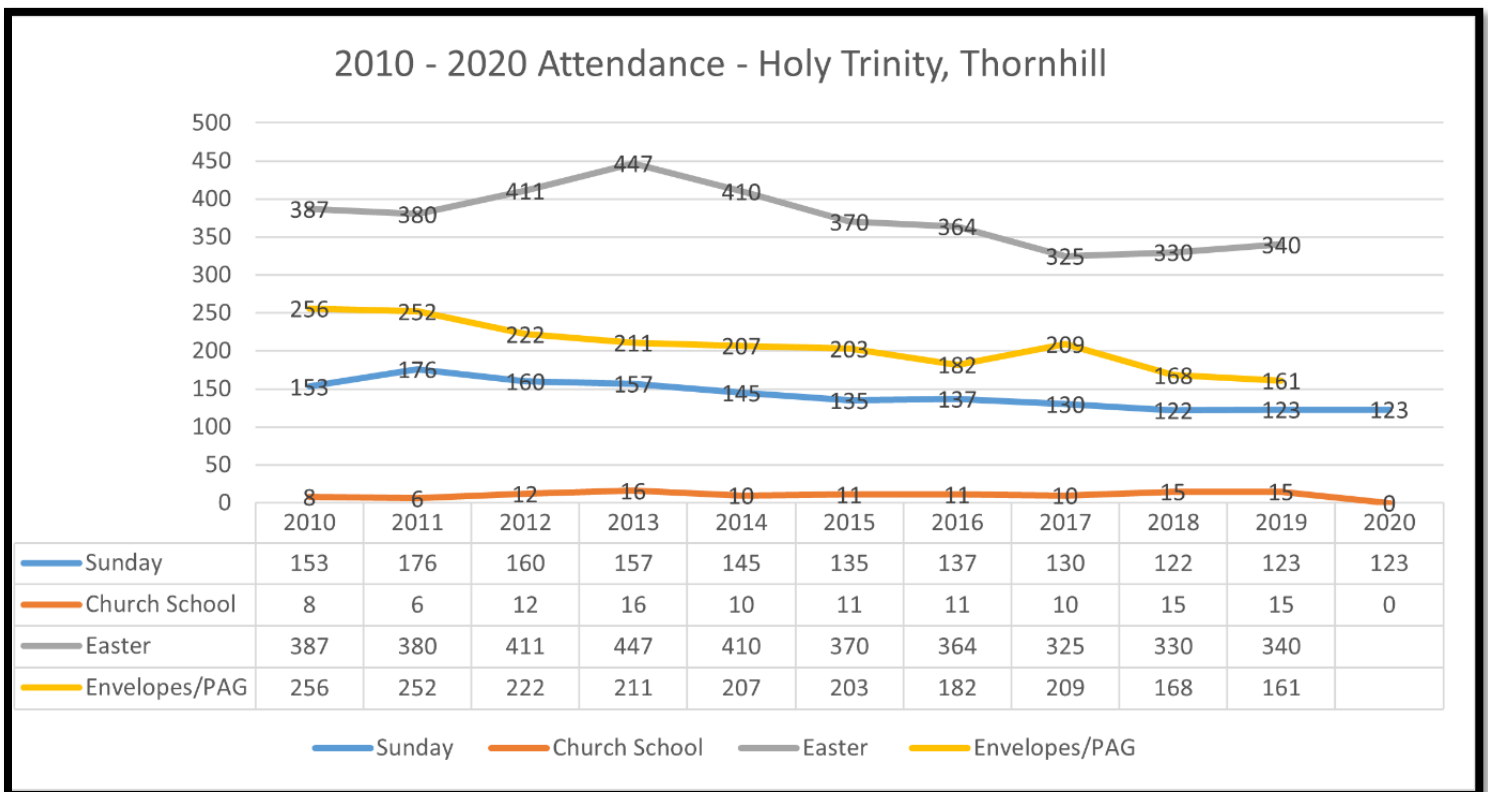
We have also had challenges surrounding the issues of change and leadership. These have created an unpleasant atmosphere on occasion which has been quite stressful for some, and recently caused us to seek help from an outside agency in

dealing with difficult conversations. We are currently working our way through this challenge, and as we do so, have been anchored by our Mission Statement which asks us to echo the teachings of Jesus, to go forward “in an atmosphere of compassion and mutual respect.”

### 3. Worship, Liturgy, and Music

Since the early 2000s, Sunday services are: 8:00am (Said Eucharist and homily), and 10:00am (Choral Eucharist and sermon). Variations occurred in the form of Morning Prayer on the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month, and occasionally, ACTION Sundays involving an innovative format and different music, usually with outside musicians. Young people attended a short talk at the start of the 10:00 am service, then went to Church school. Realizing the need for support and solace, Holy Trinity has had a healing service for several years on the third Sunday of the month at 10:00am. The 10:00am services are live-streamed on our Virtual Chapel (Zoom and YouTube) with recordings available on our [Holy Trinity website](#) and [YouTube Channel](#).

Attendance figures over the past ten years are shown in the following table:





Hymns vary from traditional to contemporary to spirituals. From September-to-June, a small, dedicated choir regularly presents a wide variety of anthems from Bach to jazz. Occasionally a junior choir will also make a presentation. Special choral presentations occur at Christmas and Easter with delightful Cantatas.

Other special forms of worship include monthly services at several retirement homes; Lenten Ecumenical services with the Thornhill Ministerial Association (seven churches); Holy Trinity School Founders Day service and Wednesday 10:00am Said Eucharist and homily.



HOLY TRINITY SCHOOL MUSICIANS



GUEST MUSICIANS

*Music has long played an important role in our worship at Holy Trinity.*

Lay participation in the worship services, including youth, has been encouraged over the years. Lately this has included opportunities as Lay Assistants, Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, and Servers. The Altar and Flower Guilds, Sidespeople, and the Greeters also support our worship services.



INSTALLATION OF SERVERS



## 4. Learning and Spiritual Nurture and Development

Holy Trinity has a tradition of many small active groups, some dedicated to learning and deepening their spiritual faith:

*Tuesday afternoon Bible Study:* Under lay leadership, has been meeting since the 1990s. Current and historical context is blended with a combination of lectionary readings, occasional book studies, and healthy spiritual discussion

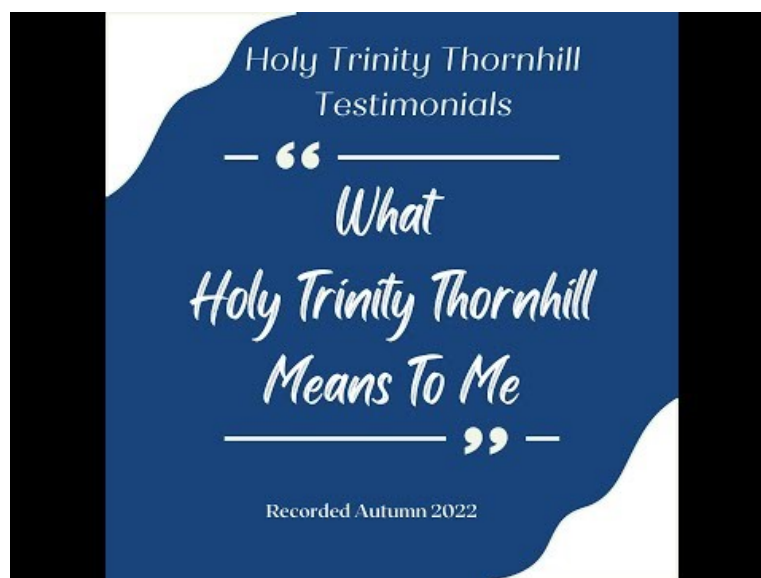
*Praying the Headlines:* Meets monthly to discuss news and current events and pray for the world in these uncertain times.

*SOaR: Start off Right Devotionals (formerly viDEoVOTIONS):* Early risers begin their weekdays (8:00am-8:30am) with prayer, music, discussion, and positivity. The group has been meeting for over four years, using ZOOM well before the pandemic.

## 5. Mutual Support and Fellowship

Fellowship is an important by-product of our many small groups. There are specialized groups such as the Advisory Board, the Quilters, the choir, the Green Team, and committees for the Cemetery, Finance, the Endowment Fund, the Eva Rea Millennium Fund, Liturgy, Outreach and Property. Special mention should be made of the ACW, which has been extremely active over the years, operating with an overall executive, and five smaller groups.

*Reflection: Malcolm Shiner on Fellowship and Community*



Before the pandemic, there were ample opportunities for fellowship on a broader scale. From coffee hour after worship services to Festival of Christmas, Seniors' lunches, Rummage sales, and other outreach endeavours, parishioners enjoy coming together. The Footlights Club, established in 1953, has presented more than 92 productions. We have restarted some of these events in 2022, with a very well-attended Footlights Club *Cabaret* night in October, a *Poinsettia Tea* Festival of Christmas in November (which raised \$7000.00), and coffee hour after Sunday services.

*Social events help us build relationships and a deeper sense of community.*

Our busy structure has worked well over the years, creating diverse opportunities for individual parishioners. We believe that individual involvement is one of the important values of a thriving church, and we encourage and welcome newcomers to join a group. We believe that the value of these groups lies in the chance to do good works, deepen our faith and understanding, and experience a sense of belonging, fellowship, and support.



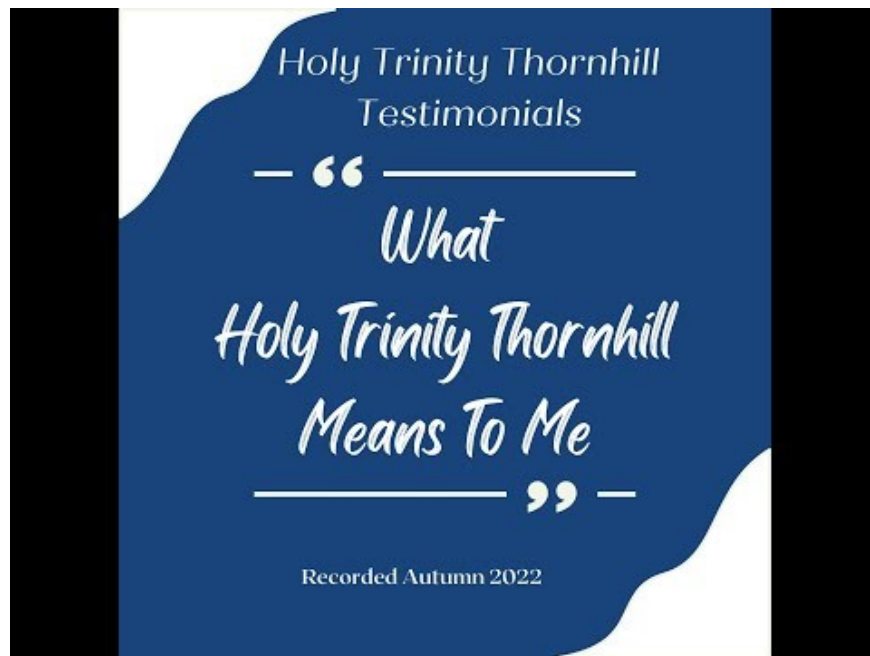
*MANY HAPPY RETURNS* (Left)

*THE WAITING ROOM* (Below)

FOOTLIGHTS CLUB ORIGINAL PRODUCTIONS



*Reflection: Jacqui Getfield on Family and Youth*



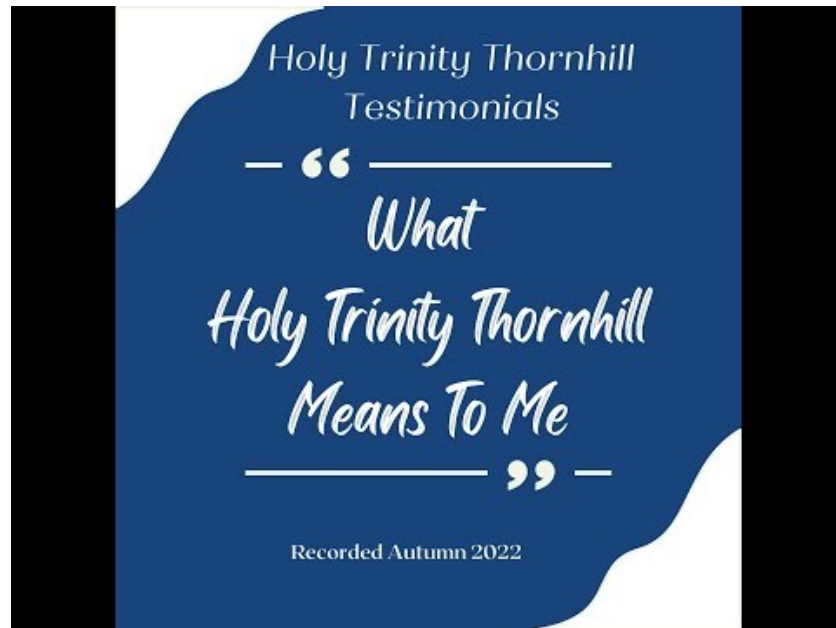
## 6. COVID 19 and the Increase in Technology

In March 2020, Holy Trinity closed its doors, like the rest of the province and much of the country. During this time of fear of the unknown, we struggled to find ways to reach out, and provide comfort and support. Fortunately, our incumbent had been holding *viDEoVOTIONS* (now known as *SoAR*) weekday mornings using ZOOM. Through his efforts, and with technical assistance from parishioner volunteers, Holy Trinity provided weekly worship services congregational gathering on Zoom, and then created our YouTube channel to livestream the service. From March 2020 to October 2021, 80 to 100 parishioners worshipped in this, our Virtual Chapel.

This in and of itself was not extraordinary, as many other churches and organizations did the same thing. What is of note is that Holy Trinity has an aging congregation, most of whom had not heard of ZOOM, let alone used it regularly. A congregation who, in the past, had very little to do with technology and had only recently voted not to upgrade our audio-visual capabilities in the church, adapted --- quickly. We received a REACH grant from the Diocese in early 2022 and used it to significantly improve the audio and video quality of our Virtual Chapel. We have also installed a large display screen at the front of the church to present the order of service (eliminating the need to use the prayer books and

hymnals) and for special presentations at events such as the Remembrance Day service and Vestry meetings.

*Reflection: Princewill Uzoukwu on Technology Expanding Worship*



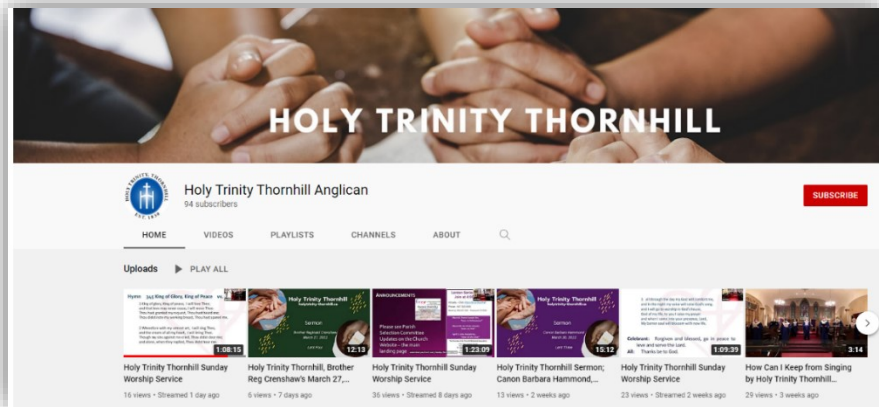
There were, however, other benefits to “having a Zoom account.” Communication between the Corporation and the parish increased both in frequency and content through announcements following services. Almost all the various committees and groups, including the choir, began meeting “on-line”. In the Fall of 2020, Holy Trinity began a Reimagining Project which included a series of conversations with parish members on what was liked about HTC, what we should keep, stop, and start doing, and what our priorities should be going forward.

These groups were chaired by parish leaders and were all online. Parishioners had a chance to respond to the final report at a virtual Town Hall held at the end of January.

***The Reimagining Project identified improved technology as a future priority.***

The development and enhancement of our website has been another benefit associated with our expanded use of technology. This website has increasingly become the virtual entrance to the parish. It includes information on worship services, videos of service and sermons, parish news and events, reports, and

announcements and how to make donations. Once again, volunteers maintain it, “learning as they go”.



HOLY TRINITY'S YOUTUBE CHANNEL

With reopening, came another set of challenges as we strove to meet various health protocols. Arrangements had to be made for proper spacing, cleaning, sanitizing, misting and contact tracing for those attending the 10:00 am service. Overall, hybrid attendance numbers remained surprisingly high. Small groups met in the church hall and outreach/community caring continued; masked sandwich-makers for “Out-of-the Cold” made more than 1600 sandwiches in our kitchen during Winter 2021-2022 for those in need.

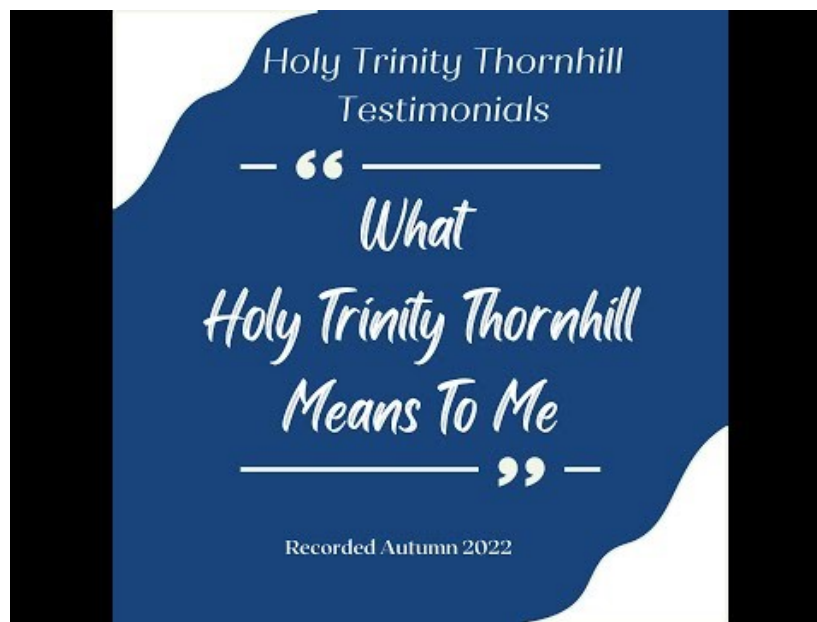
COVID did considerable damage to our 190th celebrations but the organizing committee rose to the challenge by planting 190 Canada flags, (provided by our local MPs), on the church’s front lawn. We were also able to enjoy the virtual presence of four Bishops, including The Primate, as guest speakers at various special services throughout the year.



## 7. Pastoral Care

Caring for each other and for the wider community has been a cornerstone for our faith and our worship. For the last few decades, a critical component of pastoral care has been our Parish Nurse. This position of support has been invaluable in assisting the incumbent with pastoral care for sick or shut-in parishioners. The Parish Nurse has also organized courses or programs of health-related nature such as CPR, and has regularly provided other general health information in church bulletins etc. We are currently in the staffing process to replace our most recent nurse.

### *Reflection: Rebecca Jones on Diversity*



A Health & Wellness Committee supports the Incumbent and the Parish Nurse in several pastoral related activities. They maintain contact with sick or shut-in parishioners and, those properly trained, also carry out pastoral visitations and assist the Incumbent with communion visits to local retirement and long-term care homes. They also pointed out that it can sometimes be difficult to identify those who need pastoral care. A process to more easily allow parishioners to request or be referred to pastoral care and an ability to indicate their preference as to who to speak to needs to be developed.

*During our Reimagining Project, several parishioners stated that even though the Parish Nurse and volunteers can be very helpful, at times they wanted to speak to the parish priest.*



In early December, when many have difficulty joining in the joy of the season because of the death of a family member, friends, or of any other adversity, an Advent Meditation (or Blue Christmas) service is held mid-week. It is a time to recognize and reflect that the darkness that the world can bring can be countered by the peace and light Christ offers.

God's ministry comes in many forms. One of the most active at Holy Trinity is the Prayer Shawl Ministry and our many knitters. In 2021, at least 45 shawls were shared with parishioners and friends of HTC as well as with many in pain and suffering in other regions of the country. And last but by no means least, Holy Trinity has toque knitters who made "Cancer Caps" for the chemo unit at a local hospital.



QUILTERS' LUNCHEON

## 8. Human, Financial, and Physical Resources

### Staffing

Our clergy is led by a fulltime incumbent and assisted by a Lay Pastor and an Honorary Assistant. The Lay Pastor's position is funded by a grant from OFOH until 2023. We are currently employing an Interim Priest-in-Charge and have recently added an Interim Associate Priest to conduct Sunday 8:00 AM services.

Clergy is further supported by a newly appointed Office Administrator (part-time) and a fulltime Custodian who has some responsibilities at the private nursery and kindergarten school located on the premises. Additional support staff include part-time positions of Music Director, Church School Coordinator, and a Parish Nurse (currently vacant). A bookkeeper (contract) assists the Treasurer.

## Church Property

The church building is connected to the auditorium by an atrium containing the reception room and vestry. The auditorium includes a stage with lighting and is used by the congregation (Footlights Group) and the community for live plays and presentations. A large kitchen is connected, so that the auditorium can be used for lunches and dinners. Located beneath the auditorium are the church offices and additional meeting rooms. These meeting rooms are also available for use by our community partners. We are fortunate to have ample parking and grounds and gardens which are beautifully maintained by volunteers.



PROPERTY AND GARDEN  
COMMITTEES AT WORK



In 2020, we had our most recent Property Condition Assessment, and we received a satisfactory rating. The roof shingles have now been replaced (2022). In addition, we will be updating the audio video system in the nave. Both expected disbursements will be funded by internal resources and a \$5,000 REACH grant.

## Rectory

The church currently does not own a rectory. The original rectory was sold in 1976, and the proceeds were used to establish an Endowment Fund in 1980. The Endowment Fund has funded and continues to fund various outreach projects and Holy Trinity capital and operational needs. A second rectory was sold in 2012 with the proceeds invested in the Rectory Fund. The Rectory Fund is an externally restricted fund and the capital can only be used, with the approval of the Diocese, if we acquire another rectory. The assets are invested in the Consolidated Trust

Fund of the Diocese of Toronto. The Church receives income from the Rectory Fund investments, which is then applied to the incumbent's housing allowance. We provided a monthly housing allowance to the previous Incumbent.

## Cemetery

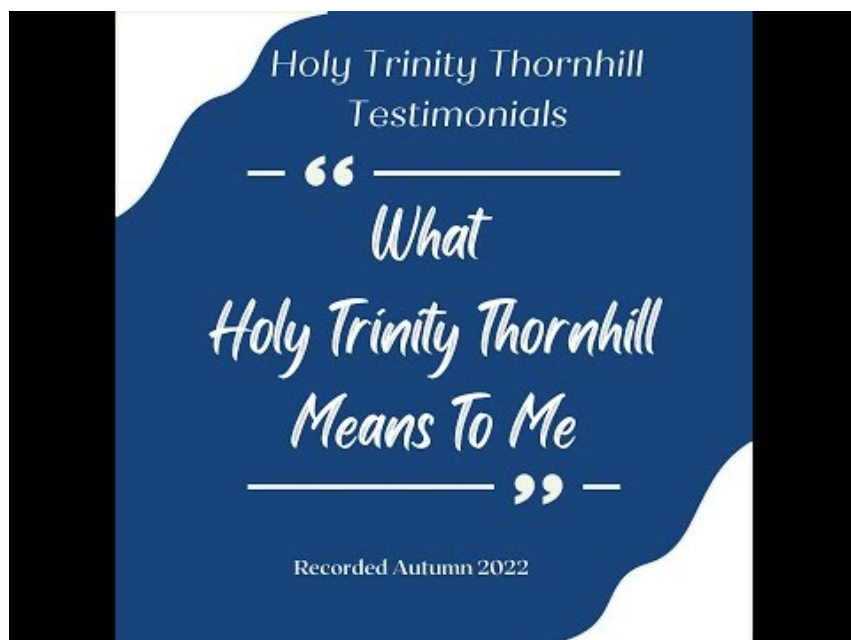
Holy Trinity Cemetery is an active 1¼ acre historic cemetery which has several interments each year. A committee of eight parishioners administer the day-to-day operations of the cemetery. Lawn maintenance is contracted out, but volunteers help with spring and fall clean-up days. Maintenance of the cemetery is funded from income generated from the Perpetual Care Fund which is invested in the Diocesan Consolidated Cemetery Fund. A few interment rights still exist for purchase.

## Finances

The financial picture has remained relatively stable in spite of COVID. In 2020, thanks to the Diocesan Jubilee and CEWS, we managed a surplus. In 2021, we ran a small deficit.

*In 2022 we are projecting a balanced budget.*

## Reflection: Youth Learning of God



## 9. Our Community and Our Mission

The Holy Trinity parish encompasses the historic village of Thornhill, which is a community with a population of over 120,000. The community straddles Yonge St, split between the City of Markham and the City of Vaughan. In between these two municipalities and to the North is the City of Richmond Hill. Holy Trinity Church is situated in the historic residential area two blocks west of Yonge St. The area has changed greatly in the last 40 years, becoming quite multicultural, home to large populations with other faith traditions and their schools and places of worship. Fifty-two percent of the population are considered having immigrant status. Seniors and empty nesters account for many of the other residents.

There are many active community groups including two active Seniors Centre/Club, the Thornhill Historical Society, the Horticultural Society, several artist groups, three golf clubs and several Community Centres. Housing has been mainly single dwellings and apartments, but condominiums are becoming increasingly popular. Several Retirement Homes have recently opened in our area. Unfortunately, many young families cannot afford housing in this area, although a few pockets of affordable rental housing do exist. With the Yonge North Subway Extension coming in the next ten years, many more apartments and condominiums are planned. This will change the demographics significantly and present new opportunities and challenges for the ministry at HTC.

### Use of Church Facilities

Community groups currently using HTC facilities include: the Girl Guides (three groups), the Thornhill Nursery School & Kindergarten and several summer camps. In addition, we are gradually reinstating our annual large-scale church run events. Many of our previous renters have not yet resumed their activities and, in the interim, we are seeking new and or different clients.



**RUMMAGE SALE PREPARATION**

## Outreach

[The disbursements are listed in the Vestry report.](#) Some of the significant outreach initiatives overseen by the Outreach Committee include:

### **Richmond Hill Community Foodbank and All Saints Church-Community Centre**

Deliveries of food and personal use items are made to the Richmond Hill Community Food Bank and pre-COVID, All-Saints' Community Kitchen/Clothing Closet. The Outreach Committee is collaborating with the Manager of the Foodbank and the ACW to draft a variety of simple recipes, culturally appropriate, for use by Foodbank clients, helping them to use foods with which they might not be familiar.

### **Christmas Assistance**

This program supports disadvantaged families in the Thornhill area during the Christmas season. In past years, volunteers from the Thornhill churches have come together to pack hampers with non-perishable foods, toys, and grocery store gift cards. Due to Covid that was not possible. Instead, families receive gift cards purchased with the donated funds.



**CHRISTMAS ASSISTANCE**

### **Mosaic Interfaith, Blue Door and Out of the Cold (OOTC)**

For the past 25 years Parishioners have been very active volunteers in the OOTC program where food and shelter are provided on Friday nights during the winter months. We also prepare lunches for those in need. Due to COVID, cuts in government funding and evolving York Region Public Health requirements, the shelter program has run in one or two locations over the past three years, and we continued to provide lunches. 2022 requirements of York Region Public Health have resulted in fewer volunteers working directly in the shelter compared to pre COVID. But we are providing Friday night shelter space for 20 weeks and lunches for our guests when they leave.



OOTC has recently merged with Blue Door. Blue Door provides long term shelter and services to get individuals/families housed and employed. OOTC is an emergency program that deals with a crisis situation providing a warm, safe, caring environment for the night during the winter months. The relationship with Blue Door is a work in progress and we continue to work with them as we help those in need.



**FEEDING THOSE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS**

### **Coldest Night of the Year (CNOY)**

This is the key fundraiser for OOTC. Our parish is at or near the top of the fundraising teams each year, and 2022 was no exception.



**COLDEST NIGHT OF THE YEAR WALK**

**RAISING FUNDS FOR THOSE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN YORK REGION**



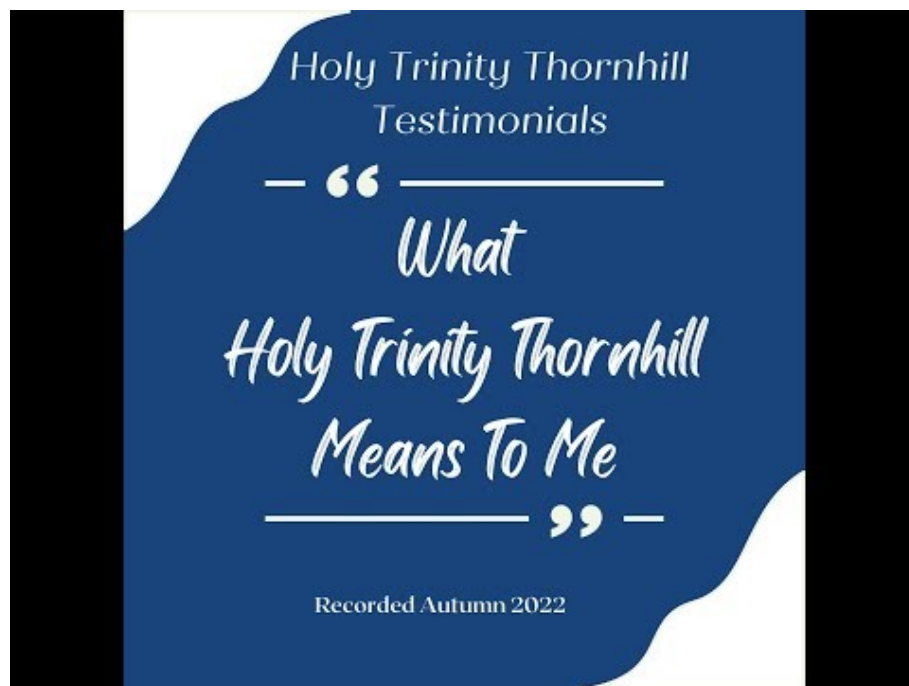
### Refugee Sponsorship

We have over the past few years, acting on our own or jointly, sponsored individuals and families from various parts of the world. We have worked with organizations such as, *Canadians Helping Asylum Seekers in Israel (CHAI)* and *Toronto Refugee Affairs Council (TRAC)*. All sponsorship processing was halted due to the pandemic, but as of mid-2022 has resumed with the planned arrival of four Eritrean refugees.

While we are justifiably proud of our many and diverse Outreach activities, nevertheless, our recent Reimagining report concluded that, as one of four major priorities, we should improve our communication with the community about what we do and improve our understanding of what the community really needs.

*In 2021, numerous charities and worthwhile causes benefitted from \$66,790 dispersed by the Outreach Committee, ACW, Endowment Fund, Eva Rea Millennium Fund.*

*Reflection: Hillary Irving-Brown on Outreach – Serving the Least Among Us*



## In Conclusion

We conclude, as we began, with our Mission Statement. Our focus will be on striving to live this as nearly as possible, recognizing that **the values it enshrines provide the model for us at Holy Trinity both now and in the future.**

*We are a vibrant, welcoming Christian community flourishing in God's love through fellowship, outreach, worship, and spiritual growth, in an atmosphere of compassion and mutual respect.*



*Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.*

## Appendices

All items listed below are available on the [Holy Trinity Church Website](http://www.holytrinity-thornhill.ca/)<sup>1</sup>

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- ii. [2021 Vestry Report](#)
- iii. [2021 Audited Financial Statements](#) (page 47 of the 2021 Vestry Report pdf)
- iv. [2022 Budget](#) (page 62 of the 2021 Vestry Report pdf)
- v. **Parish Selection Committee Survey Results**  
(<http://www.holytrinity-thornhill.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Trinity-Newsbreak-March-15-2022-Parish-Selection-with-Survey-Results.pdf>)
- vi. **Reimagining Holy Trinity 2030**  
(<http://www.holytrinity-thornhill.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Reimagine-Update-to-Parish-December-2021.pdf>)

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.holytrinity-thornhill.ca/>