

Church of Our Saviour-Don Mills



Introduction

Welcome to Our Saviour, Don Mills.

We are rooted in the Anglican tradition and our church is part of the York Mills Deanery which is within the Anglican Diocese of Toronto. We are a small, warm and welcoming parish, nestled in a suburb of Don Mills – a culturally diverse group of believers, united by our shared faith in a loving God. We have always been a parish committed to supporting the community we are a part of through the giving of our time, talents, and financial support. We hope you will join us in our journey.

Our mission statement

We are dedicated to sharing God's word, growing in faith through Jesus Christ, and supporting one another in our journey of faith. Our mission is to bring the grace of God to others through word and sacrament in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Our history

The church was established in 1960 with the first services held at the school next door. The church construction began and was completed May 8, 1962. It was built on land purchased by the Toronto Diocese, land previously owned by David A. Dunlop. We are situated in the heart of a quiet community in east Don Mills, the first urban planned community in Canada, incorporating green space (parks, ravines and walking trails) with mixed income housing and business (schools, churches, automotive garages, and shopping plazas).

Who we are

Our active parish list consists of approximately 100 members of which 50 attend church services regularly, and others view our live stream services or attend special services throughout the year. We have a congregation which appreciates music, a talented music director, a regular soloist to lead us in song, and we often have guest soloists and musicians. We are welcoming and inclusive of all, and we do our best to engage with fellow members and guests at our



coffee hour following our church service. We welcome all Christians in the community, offering wedding, baptism and funeral services when requested.

We are participating in the York Deanery new initiative to collaborate with other churches in our deanery, and currently we support the Church of the Ascension's food bank program. We are open to new ideas and opportunities to grow our faith and understanding of scripture (for example, through Bible studies or book studies). We are also open to trying new things and finding ways to attract members of the community to our church and engage our community in our journey of faith.

Here is what our parishioners have to say:

"We are a multi-cultural and multi-generational friendly congregation";

"We are a very welcoming parish to everyone, regardless of cultural background. We are Christians first";

"A wonderful Anglican church in Don Mills around to make it a cozy place to come to worship"

"Quaint, devoted, dedicated, charming, committed, loyal, and steadfast to the cause of keeping the church going";

"We are faithful Christian friends and proud members of a church that has stood as an active and welcomed symbol of God's love and presence in the Don Mills community".

Our congregation supports the following ministries:

- Online worship – live streaming our church service on our YouTube channel: *OurSaviourDonMills*
- Sunday School for school age children
- Nursery for pre-school children
- Flemingdon Park Ministry
- Monthly communion service for seniors at Revera

- ACW groups (Anglican Church Women)
- Servers, readers, and sides persons
- Chancel Guild
- Pastoral care visitation
- Bible studies
- FaithWorks
- Church of the Ascension food bank – Community Share
- Winter clothing drives
- Concerts - summertime opera box concerts, Toronto Welsh Men’s Choir

Outreach and serving the community are very important to our church:

- Providing land for a vegetable garden run by Flemingdon Park Ministry, called the Common Table – bringing volunteers in from the community to help plant, water, weed and harvest, producing approximately 2 tons of fresh produce for the Flemingdon Food Bank yearly;
- Providing meeting space for use by the community – currently rented weekly for: Math Tutoring, Bridge club meetings, Scout youth meetings, Yoga classes, Spotlight theatre group, and occasionally for music recital rehearsals;
- Providing space for a children’s summer day camp, STEM Camp (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics);
- Providing parking spaces for the townhouses across from the church and for the day care centre teachers at the neighbouring school.

Staff & Leadership

- Interim Priest-in-charge – Rev. Vernon LaFleur
- Office administrator – Joan Woodward
- Church Wardens – Nira Boteju and Enid Edwards
- Church Deputy Warden – Elizabeth Liness
- Treasurer – Michael McCormick
- Music Director – Dora Krizmanic
- Church School – Donna McCormick
- Pre-school/Nursery – 2 paid students plus a volunteer
- Custodial – external

Our strengths

Currently we offer one Sunday church service at 10:00 am, using the Book of Alternative Services. Our music program is led by our organist and songs are led by our cantor. We offer live-stream of our church service on our YouTube Channel, which was set up during COVID restrictions, and we feel it is important to continue to provide this service. We hope to resume with a second Sunday morning service. We offer nursery services and children’s ministry to attract young families.



As we grow in numbers, we look forward to having more social activities to strengthen our relationship with one another (Examples: monthly birthday celebrations, brunches, concerts). We hope to inspire new members to volunteer their time and talents, to bring forward new ideas and help organize new social events.

We are fortunate that our Church building and property are in good condition and continue to be well maintained, with recent replacement of the boiler, radiator repairs and thermostat replacements, parking lot resurfacing, and interior and exterior painting.

We are a financially sound church, with sufficient funds to afford a part-time clergy position. This may change to full-time as we continue to build our congregation. Our sources of income include: parish and community donations, rectory dividend income, parking revenue, room rentals, fundraising, and grants from York Deanery.

Our challenges

- We are in need of Lay Leadership.
- Aging congregation - many have moved to long term care homes or retirement homes.
- Increasing membership – how do we attract more young people to attend services in person?
- How do we stay connected to the aging members who cannot make it to church in person and are not technology savvy to view services through our live-stream YouTube service?

Looking ahead

We want more fellowship opportunities for our members and the community as this will help nurture and strengthen friendships, such as: pub nights, pancake suppers, Sunday brunches, movie nights, field trips, and games night. In order to achieve these goals, we need to get more people involved.



We also hope to build up thriving ministries for young people, through our Sunday School program, recruiting youth servers, and setting up a youth group where youth can plan fun activities.

We are open to 'Alternative Worship Services' and to new ideas to make services less traditional, more appealing, relevant to current events, hopefully connecting to people's hearts and building our membership. For example: all-music services, hosting a breakfast, lunch or dinner with a service, messy church.



Here is what our parishioners have to say:

"Our hope is to be able to encourage more young parishioners that will be able to carry on the work of the church later on";

"Continued growth in the spirit for individuals whose lives have been touched by God through the service of the people of Our Saviour. Heartfelt, well prepared and enthusiastic worship that draws more and more people in to the family of Our Saviour";

"We hope to stay as the welcoming family-oriented church we have always been. We also want to be open to new ventures such as the Garden";

"Have some worship music to sing together".



Our new Priest-in-charge:

- Can relate the messages of the Bible to our daily lives and struggles, and can deliver the message in a pleasant and enthusiastic way;
- Is personable with a genuine love and interest in people and their Christian growth;
- Can give good leadership to existing programs and develop new ones to attract new members to our church;
- Should have a commitment to a long-term tenure;
- Is open to changes, new ideas and constructive criticism;
- Is kind, compassionate, energetic, inclusive, and creative;
- Is musically talented and has an appreciation for music;
- Has a sense of humour and likes to have fun;
- Participates in church activities;
- Is technology savvy and open to offering live-stream church services.

Here is what our parishioners have to say:

“A priest, who during worship and other public occasions, leads with competence, authority, and confidence, and whose sermons (neither too short or too long) are inspiring and relevant to the lives of others”;

“To be personable and caring, and interested in all other aspects of our church”;

“Someone with enthusiasm, who can lead the congregation in prayers and who can ‘cantor’ effectively”.

What we can offer a Priest-in-charge

A Priest-in-charge can expect support from the Wardens, the administrative staff, church treasurer, a music director, a dedicated server and retired clergy.

We sold our Rectory several years ago; however, we are able to pay a housing allowance. We are lucky to be situated in a small, diverse community within a big city, with all the necessary amenities within a short distance.

Don Mills is a great place to be. Like other churches, we have lots of challenges, especially attracting young new members to our church. However, we continue to organize events that will give a presence in our community, so they will see that we are a viable and active church. We strive to be the centre of our community.



We conclude with our parish prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, giver of all good: we ask for your divine hand in the selection of a new parish priest for your Church of Our Saviour in Don Mills. We earnestly pray for a priest who will faithfully share your Word and encourage and inspire us in our earthly mission. We pray for Father Vernon La Fleur and thank God for his service during this interim as we wait for an appointment of a parish priest. We pray for your Holy Spirit to embolden all of us to be witnesses for you in our community, that we may bring you honour and glory and welcome our community into the church. We ask that you empower us to be creative with our resources, both spiritual and financial, and to be faithful to your ministry. This we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.