



THE CHURCH OF ST. STEPHEN DOWNSVIEW



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INTRODUCTION

The mission of The Church of St. Stephen, Downsview (CSSD) is: "To glorify God by nurturing a Christ-centred community, growing in faith and joy, and using the gifts He has entrusted to us to lovingly serve others in His name." This mission reflects the heart of CSSD as a vibrant and faithful body of believers, united in purpose and guided by the Holy Spirit.



The Church of St. Stephen, Downsview was established in 1953, originally meeting in Crang Plaza (now Sheridan Mall) at Jane Street and Wilson Avenue. Our current building was dedicated in 1956, and for over seven decades, we have sought to be a light for Christ in this community.

At the Church of St. Stephen, Downsview, worship is the cornerstone of our life together. In reverence and gratitude, we lift our voices and hearts to God—our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer—through Scripture, prayer, song, worship, service, and Spirit-led ministry. All praise and glory belong to our Heavenly Father, as we seek to walk in His will and reflect His love in all we do. Each Sunday, we gather to proclaim His Word, celebrate His sacraments, and offer ourselves in service to Christ. Through word, music, and ministry, we glorify God as we grow in his name.

Since the pandemic, our worship model has adapted to meet the needs of our congregation. We continue to offer two services each Sunday—at 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. The second service is available both in-person and live-streamed via our YouTube channel, with recordings accessible for later viewing. This allows those unable to attend physically to remain connected in worship and fellowship. Other events like funerals and weddings are also live-streamed.

Beyond Sunday worship, we are committed to living out the Great Commission by engaging in outreach and discipleship. We seek to share the love of Christ through acts of compassion, community partnerships, and programs that nurture spiritual growth. Our parish encourages members to use their God-given gifts to serve others, deepen their faith, and bear witness to the hope we have in Jesus Christ.



PRESENT REALITY

THE GOOD



The Church of St. Stephen, Downsview is a vibrant and spiritually grounded church community. It is a diverse yet united congregation where people of all backgrounds feel valued, respected, and included. Regular events like coffee hour, banquets, and trips are an important part of church life, fostering relationships outside of worship and strengthening community ties.

With an intergenerational congregation of parishioners ranging from infants to the elderly; several parishioners who grew up in the church are now raising their own children in the congregation. As a result, strong familial bonds and relationships exist within our church, which emphasizes the importance of families and actively includes members of all ages in worship and programming.

A dedicated leadership team exists within the church, that is committed to ensuring that the church attains its goals. These leaders are collectively referred to as the Corporation, which consists of the Incumbent, two Churchwardens, one Deputy Churchwarden and Treasurer. The Corporation seeks input from the Advisory Board, which is composed of 11 lay members.

In addition to the corporate team, there are a number of committees and groups managed by volunteers from the congregation. Cohesive teamwork within the Corporation and among parishioners is evident in the efficient and successful operation of the church. In collaboration with the Incumbent, and with assistance from the Deputy Churchwarden, the Churchwardens oversee the administration and management of all corporate aspects of the church, which includes appointment of lay officers, human resources, finance and property management.



CHANGES SINCE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

St. Stephen, Downsview, like many parishes in our Diocese, has experienced a period of profound change since the COVID-19 pandemic. Our church has shown great resilience, creativity, and adaptability in responding to the new challenges and opportunities that emerged during the pandemic.

Bold steps were taken to remain connected as a community of faith. Worship services were live-streamed, allowing parishioners to continue gathering in prayer and praise in the safety of their own homes. This not only ensured continuity of worship, but also extended the church's reach to those who might not otherwise have been able to attend in person.

Beyond Sunday services, the parish embraced online platforms to support spiritual growth and parish life. Bible study, morning and evening prayers, and Sunday School and Youth Groups found a new home online, providing comfort, connection and encouragement during uncertain times. Even the vital work of leadership and governance continued, with Corporation and Advisory Board meetings held digitally to guide and sustain parish ministry.

What began as a response out of necessity has evolved, and although in-person worship and fellowship has resumed, we continue to offer Sunday service live-streaming and digital meetings, which opens up new possibilities for community and outreach, blending tradition with innovation in the life of the church.

THE WORK IN PROGRESS

The world is full of many challenges: environmental, socioeconomic, and political. The Church of St. Stephen, Downsview is not exempt from these difficult situations. Our faith in Jesus and our trust that God is always in control, allows parishioners to put our challenges in His hands, confident that He will see us through them.

There is a strong team of volunteers active in various ministries. Although the parish seeks to expand its leadership base, the current leaders and volunteers demonstrate remarkable devotion by serving simultaneously in multiple roles or rotating through different responsibilities within the church. The parish is actively working to encourage parishioners to utilize their gifts and talents in ministry.

Children and youth are essential to the vibrancy of church life. Despite current fluctuations in Sunday School attendance, the church has a considerable number of children and youth within its membership, representing a vital foundation and potential for growth and renewed energy.

The Church of St. Stephen, Downsview, operates from a position of relative financial stability, having consistently met its fiscal obligations. Historically, effective fundraising efforts are a considerable asset to the church, and we are deeply grateful for our successful ability to end each year on a positive note.

Looking forward, the parish is committed to strategic growth. We recognize the success of our fundraising model and are now focused on prioritizing the future. It is imperative that we strategically plan for the future and strengthen our cumulative stewardship so that we do not have to rely as heavily on fundraising efforts.



HOPES & ASPIRATIONS

Rooted in Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit, we seek to be a mission-led church that bears witness through faith and works. We are committed to using the gifts and talents God has entrusted to us—not only within our parish but throughout the wider community. Our desire is to be a steadfast pillar of faith locally; a welcoming and caring parish where all can encounter God’s love and grace.

Looking Ahead

As we prayerfully look to the future, we aspire to grow as a vibrant community of believers, deepening our spiritual life and expanding our witness. Our priorities include:

- **Congregational Growth and Engagement:** Nurturing a strong presence of children and youth, encouraging volunteerism, and fostering committed discipleship.
- **Spiritual Leadership and Formation:** Developing leaders grounded in Scripture and faith, and promoting spiritual growth and evangelism.

Mission and Outreach

We seek to strengthen our outreach by building partnerships with local organizations and businesses and expanding programs that serve our neighbours.

- Summer Camp Restart
- Inter-Parish partnership i.e: Youth Programs, Revival Events, Culture/Social Events etc.
- Outreach workers with multilingual skills

Ministries such as Saints Café exemplify our call to outreach mission and service, standing as a beacon of Christ’s love in the Downsview community and the Diocese of Toronto. We also collaborate with the Black Creek Community Health Centre and aim to broaden these partnerships

Worship and Accessibility

We envision increasing participation in worship—both in person and online—while making our church more accessible and welcoming. Some of the improvements we would like to embark on include the following:

- Renovated and modernized church building and hall
- Air conditioning and sunshades in the sanctuary
- Rebuilt or renovated rectory
- Improved signage on the church property
- Gated parking lot for enhanced security



SUSTAINING THE VISION

To attain this vision, the church requires a core group of leaders and volunteers who are interested and passionate about serving Christ within and beyond the church walls. Ultimately, the church needs to devise and implement formal mechanisms for expanding leadership within the parish, which includes a strengthened leadership transition plan and succession strategy to train and promote new leaders. The goal is to maintain active and consistent participation from parishioners, whether it is volunteering to assist with planning initiatives/events or attending/participating in these initiatives. In order to achieve our infrastructure goals, financial stewardship is also essential; we will need to explore ways to increase offerings and pursue grants and partnerships to support our infrastructure and outreach goals.



OUR NEW PRIEST

Above all, our new incumbent must be spiritually grounded, demonstrating a deep faith in God, and an understanding of the significance of Jesus in our parish. We seek a leader who is approachable, compassionate, and dependable; someone who supports others with kindness and serves as a positive role model within the parish community. In addition, we pray for a priest who is a thoughtful and engaging teacher, able to share theological understanding to inspire and nurture the spiritual growth of parishioners. This requires a clear and confident communicator who can convey their deep faith and knowledge through powerful, relatable, and inspiring sermons that resonate with all ages and backgrounds and foster a sense of belonging.

Given our aspiration to continue to be a pillar within the community, it is important for our new priest to be a community-focused visionary who thinks outside of the box in relation to their approach to worship, outreach, and strategic planning, as we will need an innovative approach that is congruent with the context in which the church operates. To achieve this, our new priest will ideally demonstrate a passion for ministry and outreach, and have a strong ability to determine and set priorities. Developing new strategies and expanding our current outreach ministries requires an incumbent that is a supportive team player who will unify the various groups in the church and strengthen engagement with the broader community.

The Church of St. Stephen, Downsview has a strong youth presence that we would like to keep actively engaged. As such, we hope that our new Clerical Leader is dedicated to youth development, which includes guidance and mentorship for youth and youth leaders, and facilitating preparation for Confirmation. Considering that a number of youth are also servers, it is important that our new Incumbent is open to children, youth and young adult involvement in all areas of ministry and social engagement in the community. Since our parish embraces technology as part of our worship and communication, we seek a priest who is comfortable with digital tools to support and enrich our ministry. Our ministry also has a dedicated team of tech volunteers who enable our live-streams.

Our new priest would be a recognizer of gifts. This involves understanding the talents of our parishioners through fellowship, and empowering members to actively participate at all levels. This will help us fulfill our mission and attain our vision. A leader with this attribute and the others mentioned above will be able to guide and encourage the congregation in using their gifts and talents to fulfill our mission statement and overcome congregational and external challenges.

With a new priest, changes are inevitable. As a congregation, we are welcoming and flexible, and will engage with our new priest as we work together toward our strategic goal of being a pillar in the community. We have a very supportive congregation who are enthusiastically looking forward to a new incumbent, and welcome dialogue and inclusion in implementing the positive changes our new priest brings as we prepare for the current and anticipated transformations in our community.



WORSHIP, LITURGY, AND MUSIC LITURGY

Our weekly 9:00 AM Sunday service, attended by 20–30 people, is traditional and includes a said Eucharist. Following the Book of Alternative Services and the Book of Common Prayer, the service runs for approximately one hour.

The weekly 11 AM Sunday Eucharistic service is also celebrated using the Book of Alternative Services. Music has a significant presence at this service through the singing of psalms, hymns, choir anthems and sung prayer. On average, approximately 90 people attend the 11 AM service, in-person and online. However, attendance tends to fluctuate more than the early service, peaking at 300 for Christmas and Easter and dropping as low as a 60 on some Sundays during the summer months. In addition to the regular Sunday services, services are conducted on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday.

PowerPoint is used during both services to aid worshippers in following the liturgy. The sound system was upgraded in 2015, which has improved and enhanced the overall atmosphere generated by both music and speech.

Music continues to be an essential part of our worship and community. Our services are lively and spirited, with a clear preference for music that carries rhythm and energy while remaining grounded in tradition. This diversity is a reflection of the body of Christ as it brings a vibrant and soul-stirring dimension to our worship. Through these offerings, we experience the unity and beauty of God's kingdom, expressed in joyful praise and reverent worship.



The Church is blessed with a small but dedicated choir, usually five to seven members strong on Sundays. On special occasions, the music expands with additional singers, instrumentalists, or soloists from the congregation. There is a deep appreciation for traditional hymns, particularly during revival services. However, the congregation also welcomes modern praise and worship songs that lift the spirit and bring vibrancy to the service.



Musical resources include a pipe organ, a piano and a drum set. On certain feast days or celebrations, a guest trumpeter may join, adding that festive sound. Two hymnals guide the congregation's singing:

- The Hymn Book of the Anglican Church of Canada and the United Church of Canada, which is more traditional and well-loved during our revival services.
- The Celebration Hymnal: Songs and Hymns For Worship, which offers more contemporary selections.

The mix of these hymnals allows for flexibility, from solemn, time-honoured hymns to modern songs that reflect Caribbean and African rhythms.

During the summer, the annual outdoor service is a highlight. These gatherings blend popular hymns with lively songs, often supported by drums and rhythmic accompaniment, creating an atmosphere of joyful praise. Soloists from the congregation also step forward and join us from time to time. During the Christmas and Easter seasons, having guest soloists to compliment the choir evokes a dynamic spin on our traditional carols and anthems as they share their gifts of songs. They are always very warmly received and encouraged. With this multicultural blend of music, services are always captivating.

A priest considering joining us in ministry here can expect a congregation that thrives on music as a central expression of praise and worship. To strengthen and revive the music ministry, there is space to encourage greater participation in the choir, introduce fresh arrangements of beloved hymns and balance the deep roots of traditional worship with the liveliness of modern praise.

Above all, it is hard not to observe that the people of the Church St. Stephen, Downsview respond with vocal enthusiasm and delight when the music is authentic and full of energy. It never fails to unleash great joy in the spirit.

CHURCH MINISTRIES

Jesus Christ is alive and working in the midst of the parish through our various ministries within and outside of the church. As such, our ministries are structured in a manner that reflects the love of Jesus and are faith-based, as Jesus plays a significant role in all aspects of our parish life.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRY

Sunday school holds a special place in the life of CSSD, as it serves as a ministry of formation, fellowship, and faith-building. Through teaching, discussion, games, and shared prayer, Sunday School nurtures discipleship and helps our children and youth explore the Bible, learn the stories of our faith, and live out Christian values in daily life.

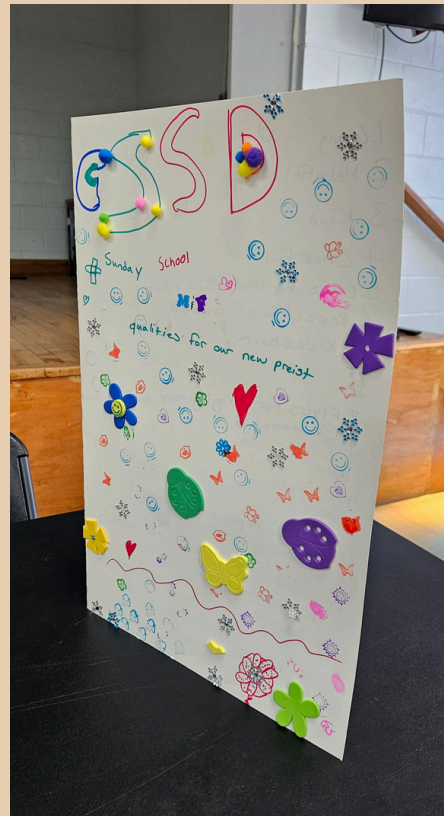
Sunday school classes are held during the 11:00 AM service on the first and third Sundays. Taught by one active teacher and one volunteer, the students are separated into two classes:

- Pre-school, Kindergarten, Grades 1 & 2
- Grades 3-6

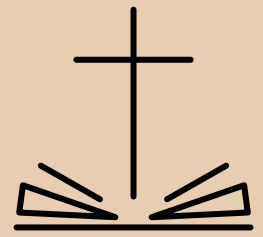
One Sunday each year is designated as Youth Sunday in which the Sunday school students, with the assistance of their teachers, lead the entire service through readings, songs and a gospel presentation. At this service we also celebrate and recognize our graduates.

Pre-pandemic, we had a thriving youth group. Although numbers have dwindled, a number of youth have remained connected to our church and act as Servers who play a significant role in assisting the incumbent during the service.

Children and Youth Ministry is central to the life and future of our parish. With renewed focus, leadership, and involvement from the wider congregation, we hope to continue building a strong ministry that nurtures faith and belonging for the next generation.



BIBLE STUDY & PRAYER GROUPS



There are two active bible study groups in the church:

Tuesday Bible Study & Prayer Group

Our Lay Led Tuesday evenings have turned out to be a learning experience for all of us. Each week we would read the designated chapter, then, we would go through verse by verse and absorb the stories in batches as they are written.

This way, we were able to study each sequence of events as we read through the account of Jesus' life as documented in the four gospels. It is fascinating to see how each writer told the same story from different angles.

As a very dedicated group, we continue to pray for every situation that arises in our midst. As born-again believers, we welcome seekers, meeting people where they are, and are holding fast to the promises of God who assured us that **'no weapon that is formed against us shall prosper,' 'anything we ask He will do it' and 'He will grant us the secret desires of our hearts.'**

The results have been astounding, so many testimonies have poured in but, we give the glory to God as without Him we can do absolutely nothing.

We consider ourselves truly blessed to be a part of such a dedicated, dependable, and loving group, and privileged to spend quality time together as we bask in the holy presence of God.

We have come to realise that when we study the scriptures, we get a glimpse of who we are in Christ, and gradually, we begin to figure out our purpose in this life.

We give thanks to God for the authority he has given to us. We stand by our commitment, we will remain in the gap and continue to intercede for every person who is sick, for all those who are elderly and not able to help themselves, those in pain and discomfort, those who are in need, those who are in some degree of bondage, those who are suffering from satanic attacks and those whose faith seems to be wavering.

Thursday Bible Study

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, a small group of parishioners gathered faithfully each Thursday evening from 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM at the church, led by our incumbent, to study God's Word.

When the pandemic changed the way we met, we embraced new opportunities for connection and spiritual growth by moving our Bible Study online. This transition allowed us not only to continue deepening our understanding of Scripture but also to expand our reach beyond the church walls.

Over the past five years, our online Bible Study has flourished, drawing participants from other parishes across the GTA and beyond. Together, we have prayerfully explored books such as Matthew, Luke, Timothy, Revelation, Job, Thessalonians, and Colossians, guided by study materials from theologian N.T. Wright.

What began as a small in-person gathering has grown into a vibrant online ministry, reminding us that God's Word is living and active, and that even in challenging times, His Spirit unites us in fellowship and learning.



WOMEN OF ST. STEPHEN

The purpose of the Women of St. Stephen (WOSS) is to gather as a devoted community of women who joyfully affirm and support Christ's ministry through worship, learning, service, and fellowship. Rooted in faith and guided by the Word, we seek to glorify God in all we do, remembering that **"whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Colossians 3:17).**

With hearts overflowing with thanksgiving, the Women of St. Stephen stepped forward in faith after the pandemic, embracing the call to resume activities that had been paused during a difficult season. Emerging from challenges and loss, we held fast to the promise that **"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1).**

Though our church family faced reduced numbers and transitions, by God's grace we persevered. Through prayer and unity, we revived cherished traditions and key events that reflect our commitment to Christ and His people.

Some of the highlights of this Ministry include:

- Annual Conference (May): Since the pandemic, we have held this conference in-person for the last two (2) years. Last year's event (2024) was a resounding success, drawing 53 women together for a day of fellowship, worship, and inspiration. We were blessed by moving and powerful presentations on this day.
- Father's Day Celebration (June): This event reminded us of the significant void left by many of our men who have moved away, become ill, or gone to their eternal rest. While their absence was deeply felt, we reflected with gratitude on the years we shared together and the opportunities we had to express love and appreciation. Though times have changed, we continue to cherish those precious memories and trust God for healing and renewal.
- Seniors' Christmas Luncheon (December): Our year concluded with a joyful celebration for our seniors, supported by a dedicated team of women. The luncheon featured delicious Christmas favourites, lively conversation, festive music, and special activities, including a Bible quiz and musical renditions by our beloved balladeer, Kanier Hodge. This event remains a cherished tradition, allowing us to honour and spend quality time with those who have paved the way for us.

Looking Ahead:

As we continue this journey, we stand on the truth of Philippians 4:13: **"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."** Our mission remains clear—to serve with humility, learn with joy, worship with reverence, and fellowship in love, so that Christ may be glorified in every aspect of our ministry. We are excited to welcome new individuals who have expressed interest in joining our ministry and share our passion for service. As we move forward, our prayer is for continued unity, peace, and love as we labour together in this community of faith. The same God who brought us together will sustain and protect us for years to come.



MEN OF ST. STEPHEN

The Men of St Stephen (MOSS) is one of our church's ministries. MOSS is still viable and active today. Although the group hasn't held a formal in-person meeting since the pandemic, communication continues via email, phone calls, zoom meetings and brief meetings after church service when the need arises. The men pay their membership dues to the MOSS Group fund.

A favourite function organized by the MOSS is honouring the women of the church on Mother's Day. This function always brings all generations together and the men look forward to providing a delicious meal, entertainment and prizes for the ladies.

Additionally, the men remain committed to the development of the youth in our church. To that end, we provide a financial gift and certificate to our high school graduates who are pursuing post-secondary study.

The MOSS also fund the purchase of bibles for the church's confirmation candidates. The men have also supported seasonal initiatives, for instance, during the Christmas season, they support purchasing gifts for the Angel Tree Network (a Prison Fellowship that provides Christmas gifts to children of incarcerated parents or to children in need).

One of the major issues facing MOSS is attracting youth to join our ministry. As the membership base gets older, this becomes more of a challenge to address to keep the group going forward.



OUTREACH MINISTRIES

Since our faith is rooted in Christ's call to love our neighbours as ourselves, outreach ministries express our faith through service, compassion, and justice. Whether through meal and support programs, pastoral care, advocacy, or partnerships with local organizations, these ministries allow us to move beyond the church walls, meeting people where they are. They are a great reminder that faith is not only what we believe, but also how we act - sharing God's love through service and striving to make a tangible difference in the lives of others. Our outreach ministries are structured to reflect the love and importance of Jesus in our lives individually, and as a parish.



THE SAINTS CAFE AND BLACK CREEK COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

Saints Café is our community outreach program led by a Program Coordinator and volunteers. We aim to serve everyone who knocks on our door and requests assistance.

On Mondays, approximately 60 grocery bags are distributed to clients, and on Wednesdays, 100 to 115 hot meals are picked up at the door. Those who are not able to access the church for pick up have their meals delivered to them within the community. Weekly, we receive deliveries from North York Harvest and Second Harvest to prepare grocery hampers and also to supplement Wednesday's hot meals.

Our clients are seniors, families with children, transient individuals and newcomers. They live in the community and also travel from other neighbourhoods for assistance.

We have grown into a one-stop-shop for all. We also provide clothing, coats, shoes, baby products and hygiene products as needed, while supplies are available.



We have a great partnership with Black Creek Community Health Centre (BCCHC), who came on board during the COVID-19 pandemic. They provided a chef who prepared the hot meals for curbside pick up and delivery to our clients as well as BCCHC's clients. Although we no longer have BCCHC's chef, we continue to meet the needs of our clients.

BCCHC continues to support us with funds through grants which enables the program to purchase food items, hygiene products, take out containers and gift cards when needed.

We also have a Community Garden which was sponsored by BCCHC. We plant produce which is used for our meals and also share with the community.

The BCCHC Mobile Health Unit also visits our site to provide health assessments to our clients and offer any assistance needed.

"You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will provide thanksgiving to God". 2 Corinthians 9:11.

PASTORAL CARE

Pastoral Care is at the heart of our Ministry at St. Stephen, Downsview, and as a parish, our willingness to help siblings in Christ is demonstrated each time we unite to assist one another, and the community. Specifically offering support to each other during crises as well as celebrations, including life changes, such as marriage, baptism, or illness. Ultimately, we experience the Grace of God through the actions of parishioners.

That said, the incumbent is responsible for pastoral care by leading and facilitating the spiritual, emotional, and practical support activities within the parish. To this end, the incumbent administers pastoral care by assisting those in need with finding accommodations, counseling, and providing financial aid assistance, as well as helping community members who show up at the church. While there are instances where parishioners will visit the sick and housebound on their own accord, a formal pastoral care team including lay volunteers does not exist, and may be warranted.

Pastoral care reminds us that our church is not just a place we gather to worship, but a community where each person is known, valued, and supported.

NEIGHBOURHOOD

The Church of St. Stephen, Downsview is home to parishioners from across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), including Ajax, Brampton, Mississauga and Vaughan, but the immediate neighbourhood served is Downsview, a Western district of old North York.

The Downsview neighbourhood is situated in the York Centre ward. According to 2021 census data, York Centre is home to 107,355 people, the majority between 20– 59 years of age. The average household income in Downsview is \$93,000, falling below the average household income for Toronto (\$132,000).

Despite serving the broader Downsview community, which is home to a diverse immigrant population (especially those from Italy and the Philippines) the majority of parishioners are from the African and Caribbean Diaspora, in addition to South East Asia and other cultural groups.

Nearby there are seven schools, one community centre, one of Canada's largest shopping complexes (Yorkdale Shopping Centre), North America's first fully digital hospital (Humber River Regional Hospital), along with a privatized airport (Downsview Airport), and Canada's first urban national park (Downsview Park) and a new, open-air entertainment venue (Rogers Stadium).

In addition, the area has had four new subway stations (York University, Pioneer Village, Highway 407, and Vaughan Metropolitan Centre) open recently. The newly opened Finch West Light Rail Transit (LRT), with 18 stops across 10.3 kilometres of rail, runs along Finch Avenue West from Keele Street to Highway 27. Multiple new condominiums are also being built. These new developments will contribute positively to the neighbourhood and are expected to promote continued growth and vitality.



RESOURCES & ADMINISTRATION

HUMAN RESOURCES

In accordance with the Canon, the administrative group for our church consists of a Rector's Churchwarden and a People's Churchwarden, as well as a Deputy Churchwarden, and a Treasurer who tracks and prepares the financial documents. The administrative group meets on the second Monday of each month to review and discuss church operations.

Our Church employs a Parish Administrator and a Custodian. In addition, we have contracted an Organist to work with the Incumbent to provide musical direction on Sundays and as otherwise required.

THE CHURCH PROPERTY

The Church of St. Stephen, Downsview was established in 1953. Since then, the Building and Electrical Codes have changed several times. While the building has maintained its functionality, targeted upgrades will help ensure continued compliance with current standards. Some parts of the Church have been upgraded. Most recently, in 2024, the church's side door was replaced, upgrades were made to our live streaming equipment and sound system, the ceiling in the lower level was re-done in 2023, and furnace and ductwork were replaced in 2022. However, there are still some significant repairs to be addressed that will require a clear capital plan and significant financial resources.



ROOF, PARKING LOT, & CHURCH GROUNDS

In 2009, the shingles on the roof were replaced. The parking lot was repaved in 2014. Both projects totaled \$84,000. The funds for these projects were raised through various fundraising initiatives and donations from parishioners and friends of the parish.

In the last few years security cameras have been installed around the perimeter of the church and at the side door, for enhanced surveillance and monitoring of the property.

The church offers annual parking rental agreements, paid monthly. There are plans to again re-pave and paint the parking lot in the near future, with parking income and fundraising initiatives being the main source of funding.

The chain-link fence located on the west side of the church property was replaced, and a new wheelchair accessible ramp was installed in 2025 at the front entrance of the church.

KITCHEN AND PARISH HALL

The Church of St. Stephen Downsview successfully applied for and obtained a grant in October 2014 from the Our Faith Our Hope Re-Imagine Church grants program to renovate its kitchen facility. The main purpose of the renovations was to facilitate the operation of the Saints Café.

Given the continued expansion of the Saints Café and the ongoing growth of our outreach ministries, the kitchen and parish hall require additional upgrades. This will be part of our capital planning expenditure and initiatives. In 2024 the Corporation began the facilitation of a feasibility study and obtained preliminary drawings and costing estimates for renovation of the church's lower level, including the kitchen and parish hall.

THE RECTORY

Built in the 1950s, the Rectory is a 3- bedroom bungalow situated on a large ravine lot. The home is located in a quiet neighbourhood near the intersection of Jane Street and Wilson Avenue, in close proximity to the church. Central air conditioning exists, along with heating through a forced air gas furnace. In addition to capital repairs to the Church, repairs are also necessary for the Rectory.

The Corporation is currently working with our Diocese to determine an appropriate plan for the rectory. In the past, an architect, real estate agent and a contractor have been consulted to explore options, including, renovation of the current structure, or sale of the rectory. Any decisions regarding the rectory will require approval from our Diocese and the Bishop; however, it is not anticipated that a decision will be made prior to the arrival of the new Incumbent. We will provide a housing allowance for the incoming Incumbent.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

As previously mentioned, finances remain stable at The Church of St. Stephen, Downsview. We closed 2024 with a manageable deficit of \$3000. Through prudent stewardship and the continued commitment of our congregation, we are well positioned to restore balance in the coming year. Fundraising continues to be a significant portion of our income.

Financial highlights for 2024/2025 include:

- A comparison for January –June 2024 to January–June 2025 indicates a 10% increase in the number of donors
- Our total donations have seen a 33% increase in the periods of January–June 2024 vs January to June 2025.

With major capital projects on the horizon for the Church and the Rectory, it is imperative for the Corporation to develop a sound plan for constraints and funding.

More information regarding our church's finances can be found in our [2025 Vestry Report](#).



**Charitable Gifts
2024**

**\$189
Thousand**



**Operating Expenses
2024**

**\$403
Thousand**



**Deficit
2024**

**\$3
Thousand**



**Carried Over to
2025**

**\$41
Thousand**

FUNDRAISING MINISTRY

At the Church of St. Stephen, we believe that stewardship is an act of worship, rooted in the words of 1 Peter 4:10: **“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”** Fundraising is therefore not just about resources—it is about fellowship, service, and building up the body of Christ.

Over the years, our parish has embraced several fundraising initiatives, or “special efforts” as they are known, to support the mission and ministry entrusted to us. These include beloved traditions such as the Good Friday Fish Fry, Easter and Thanksgiving Bake Sales, and our annual Walkathon, which has become a cornerstone of our fundraising ministry.



The Walkathon is more than a fundraiser—it is a celebration of community and health, reminding us of 3 John 1:2: **“Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.”** Participants walk 5KM, 10KM, or even 21KM in the neighbourhood or their own communities, and some very motivated parishioners even cycle to join in the effort! Through this event, we not only raise funds but also promote physical well-being as part of our holistic approach to ministry.

We are grateful for the ongoing partnership of the Black Creek Community Health Clinic (BCCHC), which has generously supported this initiative by underwriting the cost of t-shirts and providing a mobile health clinic for metabolic checks on Walkathon day. In recent years, they have also added a Zumba session to conclude the event—a **joyful reminder that caring for our bodies honours the Creator who made them (Psalm 139:14).**



By God’s grace, this ministry has contributed approximately \$8,000 to \$10,000 annually, enabling us to continue the work of the Gospel in our parish and beyond. As 2 Corinthians 9:7 reminds us: **“God loves a cheerful giver.”** Every step taken and every gift offered is a testimony to His faithfulness and our shared commitment to His kingdom.



As we look to the future with gratitude and optimism, we pray for a priest who will walk with us in ministry, guiding and inspiring our parish family as we grow together in Christ's love. Our parish looks forward to welcoming you, as we continue to build a vibrant community, rooted in worship, service, faith, and love.



The Church of St. Stephen
Downsview