

**We Treasure Our Past
We Hope In The Future**



**The Pastoral Plan of
St. Patrick's Parish, Halifax**

May 2016

Revised Fall 2018

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Introduction

St. Patrick's, a parish of 175 plus people regularly attending Sunday Mass, is growing and thriving within a neighbourhood surrounded by major residential development projects. These projects include mixed income condos, townhouses, and renovations of single-family homes and low cost housing. The significant residential development that has begun, and the plans for future investment, speaks to the need for St. Patrick's to remain a beacon of faith and hope within this community.

It is anticipated that the government contract awarded to the Irving Shipbuilding Company will bring even further development to the neighbourhood and this will have an economic impact on the area. Since our strategic plan of 2013, the City of Halifax has approved a plan for the redevelopment of the Cogswell interchange. One of the core objectives of the redevelopment plan is to link the Brunswick Street heritage area, Gottingen Street and the residential neighbourhood that surrounds those corridors to the downtown and waterfront. HRM's recently launched Centre Plan, an effort to better understand land use and guide development in the urban core projects an addition of 50,000 to 60,000 people in the urban core of Halifax and Dartmouth in the next few years. These few examples present a picture of significant growth, not decline.

This reviving of the neighbourhood means that the more affluent population this brings is moving closer to an already established community which is more marginalized and socio-economically disadvantaged. The ongoing development of the neighbourhood will require a parish leadership and a faith community that is fully aware of the diverse populations within its parish boundaries and the need to propose and promote an evangelization effort that invites these individuals to come and experience a welcoming and diverse faith community worshipping together. There is already a strong foundation in place for this evangelization effort: the present community of St. Patrick's is quite diverse in terms of ethnic origin and socio-economic standing.

Aware of the struggles that exist to assign a priest, St. Patrick's is committed to working co-responsibly with the Archdiocese in embracing other models for pastoral care of our parish community if necessary, encouraging its lay members to respond to their baptismal call to serve the church and the community in collaboration with the ordained members of the church. The New Evangelization mission "to propose Jesus Christ directed towards the formation of life-long disciples of mature adult faith" is a central strategic goal of this pastoral plan.

Parishioners of St. Patrick's understand how and why the parish plays a vital role in their lives, the faith community, the neighbourhood in which it is located and the Archdiocese of Halifax-Yarmouth. They believe St. Patrick's should continue to play a meaningful role for all the members of the church community and the neighbourhood for many years to come.

As we commit ourselves to the Church's plan for renewal, embracing the New Evangelization and opening ourselves to the graces that come our way, we acknowledge the challenges that are before us: to re-evangelize our faith community; to reach out to those in our neighborhood who have fallen away from the faith or who have yet to hear the message of Jesus Christ; and to address our plan for fiscal renewal.

As Pope Francis has asked us to do, Archbishop Mancini invites us to enter into a year of Atonement “in response to the sexual abuse crisis and the symptoms of the Church’s unhealthy state of spiritual life...to enter into a year of purification, of special prayer, and fasting...to become one again.” May we be open to this invitation to ongoing renewal and unity as we continue to respond to God’s graciousness and embrace a life-long process of discipleship and spreading the Good News to others.

Vision

*To be a vibrant, welcoming faith community
that invites others to share in our Joy
in the Gospel of Jesus Christ*

Mission

- Reaching out to others and welcoming them. This includes:
 - ❖ People of all faiths: Among them, some simply wish to be part of our broader community, and others are moving towards incorporation into the Catholic Church.
 - ❖ People of all races: Already our community includes a flourishing group of persons of NS African and African, Indian and Asian origin who play a key role in the life of our community.
 - ❖ Persons in all states of life: Married couples, single persons, single parents, persons in loving relationships, divorced and separated persons, widows and widowers, persons of varied sexual orientation or gender identity. We honour and promote their journey to greater fullness wherever they find themselves.
 - ❖ Families with children: Children and their parents are especially welcome. Our church is a space where the children can be themselves and find a home.
 - ❖ Persons for whom life is a difficult struggle: They may be homeless – and there are many in our neighbourhood – or struggle with various challenges, seeking to manage them or recover from them.
 - ❖ Visitors from far and near: Many families have moved from St. Patrick's but still maintain a vital connection; others seek us out as a friendly inner-city church; tourists visit us and join us in worship.
- Inviting them:
 - ❖ To hear the Gospel and take it to heart
 - ❖ To join its Eucharist-based community
 - ❖ To meet Jesus Christ personally
- Identifying needs, spiritual and material, and assisting them as best we can.

Values

We seek:

- to reverence the dignity of each person.
- to extend hospitality to all.
- to promote unity and understanding with other faith communities.
- to journey with those seeking to belong.
- to reach out to alienated Catholics.
- to care for the needs of the less fortunate.
- to empower all to discover, use, nurture, and share their gifts.
- to provide an oasis in the old north end.
- to allow Jesus to form us as a genuine Community in the Spirit.

Strategic Goals and Action Plans

To foster the New Evangelization, as envisioned by Archbishop Anthony Mancini in his *Equip the Saints – 3-year Pastoral Plan for the Archdiocese of Halifax*, through our own parish planning process that focuses on building a faith community through:

1. Meaningful liturgical services, education in the faith and formation in the spiritual life.

Action plan:

- To provide liturgies which are vibrant and centered on Christ, and which provide a place of healing and hope for those who participate.
 - 2017-2019: work with the Religious Education Coordinator to promote ongoing formation and ministry for our Youth.

Year in Review and Recommendations:

There have been no specific programs or activities for the youth of the parish. It was suggested that given the numbers of youth in our parish and the challenge of trying to bring the group together that the parish reach out to other parishes on the peninsula and try to collaborate and join our youth with other parish groups.

- Plan for annual ministry formation day for all lay parish ministries with Commissioning taking place on Pentecost Sunday.

Year in Review and Recommendations:

The parish's annual lay formation day took place on May 5th with an excellent turnout. The morning began with prayer followed by a viewing of Lenten video #3. Our guest speaker was Dina Simmons of St. Benedict Parish speaking on the theme of Lay Formation. Four workshops were offered: Music/Choir; Lectors; Altar Servers/Ministers of the Eucharist; and Hospitality. The annual lay formation morning resulted in 19 members of the parish expressing an interest in a different ministry and 8 members of the parish expressing an interest in a ministry for the first time. A Lay Commissioning service was held at our Sunday Mass on June 3rd. Ninety (90) members of the parish were commissioned into a parish ministry. That means that around 51% of our parishioners are actively involved in one or more of our parish ministries.

- To renew the transmission of the faith in the parish through:
 - programmes for sacramental preparation
 - programmes on theology and spirituality
 - RCIA for new converts and others wanting to deepen their faith
 - laity led bible-study and prayer groups
 - parish missions

- 2017-18: Introduce Parish Bible Study Program (*The Bible Timeline: The Story of Salvation* program). (23-week program started in October 2017).

Year in Review and Recommendations:

Weekly classes were held presenting the Old Testament section of program. The class will resume in September to complete the New Testament section of the program. The program consists of 23 sessions. Given the time commitment involved with offering the program, it was recommended that it would not be offered yearly. It was also suggested to research other programs on introducing the Bible that would be shorter in duration.

- 2017-18: Introduce a weekly Children's Sunday Bulletin that is interactive, offering activities that help children learn and reflect on their faith. (Children's Bulletin started in September 2017).

Year in Review and Recommendations:

A children's interactive Sunday bulletin was prepared from September to June and was very well received. The Children's bulletin will continue in 2018-19. A small desk top colour printer is requested to print the weekly interactive bulletins.

- 2017-18: Encourage and support the youth of parish to form a group and organize activities that facilitate ongoing faith formation.

Year in Review and Recommendations:

As noted above, discussions will continue with the best approach for ongoing youth formation with a specific recommendation to reach out to other parishes on the peninsula and collaborate. Recommendation to try to find a time in the Fall to gather the youth together for conversation about ongoing formation.

- 2017-18: Plan for an annual parish Lenten Mission. Other parishes will be invited to attend. (Plans are currently underway to invite a priest experienced in leading parish missions to come to St. Patrick's at the beginning of Lent).

Year in Review and Recommendations:

A Parish Lenten mission did not take place. It was discussed and recommended to proceed with planning for two formation events in 2018-19: 1) 7-week program on *Laudato Si* to begin in the Fall with a Team Leadership approach and presentation and 2) An Advent Lenten mission that focuses on the theme of family and sacred Creation. A Sister of Charity will be approached to lead the mission.

Other Parish Events in 2017-18:

1. Famine Irish Documentary produced by Kevin Moynihan was offered in March as a part of our parish feast day celebrations. The event focused on themes of modern-day realities of famine, human displacement, first responders who welcome our

modern-day refugees. The event was well attended with excellent discussion on the themes presented.

2. *Laudato Si* Documentary produced by Kevin Moynihan was presented in April. The event was very well attended with excellent discussion around our human responsibility to care for each other and the world. This event was a catalyst for the offering of the parish 7-week program on Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si* and the theme for a parish Advent mission in 2018.
3. Archbishop Anthony Mancini's Annual 3-part Lenten Video Series was offered by the parish. Video 3 on the theme of lay formation was presented at the parish's annual lay formation morning in the Spring.

2 To make the parish better known as a vibrant catholic community and to invite others to join.

Action plan:

- To reach out to the community at large with events within and for the neighbourhood. Those who do not fully participate may still be touched by the hospitality of the parish and its life of prayer and liturgy.
- 2017-19: Continue with annual parish events: Fall Fair, Pancake Breakfast, St. Patrick's Day Feast Celebrations, Sunday After Mass Brunches, Halloween Event, Doors Open Halifax, Mother's Day Brunch at Parent Resource Centre.

Year in Review and Recommendations:

A number of parish community building events were successfully organized by the Parish Event Planning Group: Fall Fair, Halloween Pumpkin Carving Contest, Pancake Breakfast, and Annual St. Patrick's Feast Day Celebration. It was recommended that we offer this year after mass brunches occasionally throughout the year and try to open them up the wider neighbourhood community. The annual Mother's Day brunch for mothers at the Parent Resource Centre sponsored by the parish was a big success again this year. The parish is always seeking to find ways to connect more directly with the residents of the neighbourhood. Supporting the work of the Parent Resource Centre in Uniacke Square and the needs of the neighbourhood school Joseph Howe is a priority for the parish.

Other Programs:

This year parishioners have come together to open the doors of the church during the summer and fall months to allow tourists, visitors and all in the neighbourhood and city to enter the church and enjoy its sacred beauty.

- 2017-18: Renewed parish website. (Parish website has been redesigned and launched. Training and further updates are in progress.)

Year in Review and Recommendations:

Regular updating of the parish website continues to ensure that parish information is current and in alignment with the parish strategic direction.

- 2017-18: Installation of exterior sign for the church that includes new vision statement. (Design of sign is underway with plans to install in the Spring).

Year in Review and Recommendations:

Quote and design have been requested from Imagine It Design. The plan is to have the sign install by the end of summer.

Other areas of discussion for the exterior of the church centered on parish parking.

Recommendations: Arrange for a number of designated parking spots for parishioners and visitors with mobility challenges.

3 To reach out to those in the neighbourhood who are in need of various forms of social assistance.

Action Plan:

- Involve ourselves in various initiatives in the neighbourhood to help the marginalized and homeless.
 - 2017-19: Continue with outreach programs:
 - Hope Cottage Supper Group
 - Parent Resource Centre Annual Mother's Day Brunch
 - Joseph Howe School – annual school supply collection
 - Collaboration with St. George's Church: Refugee Committee, Saturday St. George's Supper Group, YouthNet Program

Year in Review and Recommendations:

Parishioners continue to generously offer their service to many areas of outreach in the parish neighbourhood. Support continues with all the above-mentioned ministries.

- Encourage and foster the work of the St. Patrick's Conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Society.
 - 2017-2019: Continue to collaborate with and support the work of St. Vincent de Paul Society and to encourage new Vincentians.

Year in Review and Recommendations:

The Saint Patrick's St. Vincent de Paul Conference was founded in 1873 and has been operating continuously since then. There are currently around 25 active Vincentians serving those in need in our neighbourhood. In 2017, St. Patrick's Vincentians helped a total of 961 adults and 333 children. They made 711 home visits. Most of the assistance is with food (\$45,350) and utilities (\$1,850). Christmas presents were provided for the children of the neighbourhood (\$2,700). Our parish community is blessed with generous Vincentians and benefactors.

4 To continue implementing a partnership model between clergy and laity in the leadership of the parish.

Action Plan:

- Strengthen our Pastoral Council, Finance Committee and other parish committees to reflect co-responsibility and mutuality in leading and managing the parish.
 - 2017-2019: Pastoral Team to meet monthly to discuss parish needs and strategic direction.

Review of Year and Recommendations:

The Parish Pastoral Team met monthly or as needed throughout the year to discuss parish needs and strategic direction of the parish.

- 2017-2019: Finance Committee to meet as needed throughout the year.

Review of Year and Recommendations:

The parish Finance Committee met as needed throughout the year. It was recommended by Pastoral Council that the Finance Committee submit a report at least two times a year. It was also recommended that either the parish Financial Administrator or the Finance Committee Chair attend Pastoral Council meetings to answer any questions that arise pertaining to parish finances.

- 2017-2019: Parish Pastoral Council to meet monthly and collaborate with the Parish Pastoral Team in moving parish strategic plan forward.

Review of Year and Recommendations:

The Parish Pastoral Council meets monthly from September to June.

- 2017-2019: Annual Parish Pastoral Council/Pastoral Team planning day to review and renew Parish Pastoral Plan. (To take place in June of each year to plan and prepare for September).

Review of Year and Recommendations:

The Parish Pastoral Council reviewed the parish strategic plan at an extended meeting of the Pastoral Council in June for the purpose of reviewing strategic actions in the previous

year and setting pastoral priorities for 2018-19. This revised strategic plan reflects the strategic planning process under way in the parish.

- 2017-2019: Liturgy Committee to meet quarterly to plan for liturgies that help to engage and build the parish community.

Review of Year and Recommendations:

The parish Liturgy Committee met quarterly to plan for the liturgical seasons and liturgies of the parish.

5 To ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the parish.

Action Plan:

- Focus on the financial challenges of the parish by supporting the efforts of the parish finance committee, notably to enhance the ordinary revenue base of the parish.
 - 2017-2019: Establishment of a building and maintenance group. Purpose to attend to small parish projects. Complete an inventory of small projects that need attention and form a team to complete them.

Year in Review and Recommendations:

Harold MacNeil has accepted leadership on forming this group and developing an inventory of small projects that need attention in the church and around the church property.

- 2017-2019: Communicate with the parish through the Sunday bulletin the budget required for parish operation and actual ordinary revenue collected.

Year in Review and Recommendations:

The Sunday collection is now being presented in the Sunday Bulletin alongside the budget for the year. The Parish Administrator addressed the budget situation with parishioners in June from the pulpit, encouraging parishioners to increase giving and consider signing up for PAR contributions. A PAR drive will take place in the Fall.

- 2017-2019: Align financial resources of the parish with the goals/actions identified in the parish pastoral plan.

Year in Review and Recommendations:

Parish spending in the last year focused on child, youth and adult formation; community building; promotion of the parish through website/external signage and outreach; and building maintenance needs.

6 Work in collaboration with the Restoration Society on initiatives that will generate revenues for the maintenance and restoration of the Church building.

- 2017-2018: Meeting with engineering consultants in the Fall to confirm cost of exterior church renovation. Plan for fundraising campaign and repairs in the Summer/Fall of 2018.

Year in Review and Recommendations:

Much work still needs to be done to move towards commencing the work of repairing the front façade of the church. The intent is to raise the necessary funds to carry out the renovation. The estimate is now higher than originally quoted. The Society is currently discussing possible fundraising projects that may begin in the Fall.

Parish Discernment Process Questionnaire and Results

The following letter and questionnaire were distributed to parishioners over a three week period beginning April 10, 2016. The congregation was asked to take time to prayerfully reflect on the questions and complete the questionnaire by Sunday, May 1, 2016.

Letter:

As we continue our journey as a parish, Archbishop Mancini wants us to offer him our response to the urgent and complex issues that face us. This will guide him in his discernment process in relation to Saint Patrick's.

Issues relating to the church building (safety, cost of emergency repairs, readiness to commit our time and financial resources in a funding campaign) we will not tackle until the Restoration Society provides further data, especially on cost. This data will be available for discussion with the parish very soon.

But issues relating to our community of faith are even more important, and that is where we will begin. You have been praying for the future of our parish. Please include your discernment on these issues in your prayers. There are a number of questions on the reverse side of this sheet, and your response is essential. Obviously, the number of responses we receive will say something about whether we really have the will to continue or whether many of us are indifferent or passive. We cannot take for granted that the parish will always be there for us. We have to commit ourselves to make it happen.

Moreover the mission statement and objectives we adopted in 2013 are being reviewed by the pastoral council. Any amendments will be brought to the parish, and the final version to the Archbishop, who wants to know about what pastoral plan will carry us forward as a community of faith.

Two different issues require the discernment of each one of us in the parish.

First, do we want to continue as a parish and in what setting? We presume that on the whole parishioners would like to continue worshipping in our current locale, but what is their level of commitment to work together to ensure that this will happen? And are they open to an alternative setting if that becomes necessary?

Second, we have to deal with the issues regarding the shortage of priests in the Archdiocese. The current priest-in-charge is being transferred in the summer. Are the parishioners ready to go with another model than the current one should there be no available replacement?

Take some time to pray over this. After Mass on April 17th and 24th there will be persons at the back of the Church to answer your questions (Michele O'Neill, chair of the pastoral council,

Jean-Marc Laporte, priest-in-charge). Deadline for your answers: Sunday, May 1st. There will be a basket at the back of the church to collect them.

Saint Patrick's Pastoral Council

Questionnaire:

Check all boxes which apply:

Connection to the Parish:

A regular member for 5 years or more ☐

A regular member for less than 5 years ☐

I come occasionally ☐

I am a visitor ☐

I usually come to church with my spouse ☐ with my children ☐

I want the church building and the parish to continue to be available to me ☐

I am ready to be an active member of the community to make this possible ☐

I am ready to offer assistance in a campaign to obtain funds needed for emergency repairs:

By volunteering ☐ by a donation ☐ neither ☐

If the church building is no longer available, I would be ready to remain in the parish but in another location: Yes ☐ No ☐

We should continue the present model of a priest assigned to the parish: Yes ☐ No ☐

If that is not possible, I am ready for another model: a non-priest administrator assisted by a priest to provide the sacraments (especially Sunday Mass): Yes ☐ No ☐

The administrator could be a trained layperson, male or female: I agree ☐ I disagree ☐

I would continue to worship regularly at St. Pat's even if at times there would be a liturgy of the word and communion without celebration of the eucharist: Yes ☐ No ☐

Comments: (You are invited to respond in the space below to any of the above questions or raise other issues)

You may if you wish give us your name:

Name: _____

Results of the Questionnaire:

- 147 questionnaires were completed.
From an analysis of those who gave their names, we could tell which couples answered separately, which answered as one person. We could not make a similar analysis of those who were anonymous. In effect the response was more like 160-165 members.
- 91 questionnaires were identified, 56 were anonymous.
- 101 came from parish members for 5 years or more; 25 from parish members for less than 5 years; 23 from persons who come occasionally; 1 from a visitor (a few gave more than one answer, so the total is more than 147.)
- 64 come to church with their spouse; 22 with their child(ren)
- 141 want the church and the parish to continue to be available. 6 left this box blank, but 2 of those 6 are ready to come forward with a donation and/or volunteer work. Comments indicate that this is a strong point.
- 113 are ready to be an active member of this community to make continuation possible. 34 left this block blank, but 24 of those 34 are ready to come forward with a donation and/or volunteer work.
- 86 are ready to volunteer; 96 are ready to come forward with a donation.
- If the present church building is not available, 62 would be ready to continue in the parish but in another location; 56 not ready; 13 unsure; 16 left this blank. For many this is a last resort.
- 140 want to continue with the present model of priest assigned to the parish; one no; 6 blank.
- Barring the above, 127 would be ready for a non-priest administrator with a priest for mass and the sacraments; 10 not so; 10 blanks.
- The administrator could be a trained lay person: 123 yes; 13 no; 11 blank
- I would still come to St. Pats if at times there is a liturgy of the word and communion without celebration of the Eucharist: 115 yes; 23 no; 1 unsure; 8 blanks .

Analysis of Results:

- There was a response rate of about 75% based on a typical attendance of 200-250.
- Approximately 67% of those who answered signed their names. A good number offered comments. This indicates a high level of commitment and concern on the part of parishioners.
- It is clear that the preference of virtually everyone who answered the questionnaire is that they prefer to continue to worship in their church as parishioners have done since the parish was founded in the mid-19th Century, with a parish priest and various pastoral services and forms of outreach. Comments indicate that the beauty of the church and the vibrancy of the community of faith are key factors in this.
- There is a strong consensus among parishioners to continue to be active members of the parish. Most are ready to volunteer in some capacity or other, which means involvement in various fund-raising efforts and a campaign, and to help collect the money needed for repairs, and most are ready to make a donation. That some are not able to help is understandable, since some parishioners are older and others are in difficult financial situations. There is a reserve of good will that the restoration society can call upon.
- The question of whether parishioners would be ready to continue as members of the parish and worship at St. Pat's in another location within the parish boundaries was a difficult one. A few indicated they were undecided, and a number did not answer. Of those who answered a small majority indicated that they would be ready – reluctantly because they prefer to stay put – to worship in an alternate site, but the total of those who did so was only 62.
- The other questions deal with the future configuration of the parish. Obviously most want the present model to continue: i.e. a parish headed by a part-time pastor or priest administrator. But the members of the parish have been told many times that this may not be possible given the scarcity of priests in the archdiocese, so the questionnaire tested parishioners' willingness to have the parish continue with another model. A very strong majority (127/147) were ready to have a non-priest as administrator, who would find a priest to offer required sacramental services. Slightly fewer (123/147) were ready to accept a qualified lay person to be the administrator of the parish. 113 were ready for the eventuality of full Eucharist not being offered each Sunday in the church – with a liturgy of the word /communion service. It would be important for such services to be offered, in order to maintain the community as vibrant and active, and the level of collections sufficient to keep the parish financial viable. There was a very small minority of parishioners uncomfortable with Sunday services without Eucharist.

Appendices

Parish Governance Structure

Pastoral Team appointed by Archbishop Anthony Mancini in 2016.

Parochial Administrator: Deacon Art Mitchell

Assistant for the New Evangelization: Michele O'Neill

Assistant for Financial Affairs: David O'Connor

Parish Assistant – Cheryl Delaney

Religious Education Coordinator: Sr. Bernadette Cool, FoH

Pastoral Council: The Pastoral Council assists Deacon Art Mitchell in promoting and administering the parish. Current members are:

Deacon Art Mitchell (Parochial Administrator)

Michele O'Neill (Chair)

Michelle Baker (Secretary)

Laura Freeman

Christian Hubley

Harold MacNeil

Rick O'Leary

Joanne Titus

Ex-Officio :

Sr. Bernadette Cool, FoH (Religious Ed Coordinator)

David O'Connor (Financial Affairs)

Rick Butler (Restoration Society)

Finance Committee: This committee is responsible for establishing the budget and monitoring the finances of the parish. The current members are:

Kevin Moynihan (Chair)

Rick Butler

Deacon Art Mitchell (Parochial Administrator)

Liturgy Committee: There has been a Liturgy Committee at St. Patrick's for many years. Members assist the pastor in planning, coordinating and implementing the many sacred services and celebrations that take place at St. Patrick's each year. Current members are:

Sr. Cecilia MacNeil, Co-chair

Deacon Art Mitchell, Co-chair

Holly Dacey-Joudrey

Ged Blackmore

Alan Hemphill

Aline Bourgeois
Rose Hubley
Sr. Bernadette Cool, FoH
Michele O'Neill

Religious Education Committee: This committee will devise, implement and promote family centered programs for sacramental preparation and religious education... Current members are:

Sr. Bernadette Cool, FoH – Children's Religious Education Coordinator
Katrina Mentink
John Murphy
Joanne Titus
Michele O'Neill

Children's Liturgy: The Children's Liturgy program has been operating since about 1990. It is a vibrant and successful program. Current leadership are:

John & Andrea Murphy
Alex MacLeod & Crystal Garrett
Sr. Bernadette Cool, FoH

Adult Faith Formation Committee: The committee will devise, promote and implement programs that support the ongoing faith formation of adults in the parish. Current members are:

Michele O'Neill (Chair)
Patricia Donnelly
Jo-Ann MacNeil

Ministry of Care: The ministry of care centers on reaching out to those in the community who are sick or who have lost a loved one. Team members:

Cheryl Delaney
Pauline Leppard
Sr. Cecilia MacNeil
Margaret Snow

Refugee Committee: There have been two previous Refugee Committees in operation since about 2000. We are currently working collaboratively with St. George's Anglican Church to sponsor a Syrian family. Current members supporting this work are:

Bob Doherty
Maura Sullivan
Ad hoc members and friends of St. Patrick's who assist where and when needed

St. Vincent de Paul Society: Our conference was established in 1867. The conference is one of the oldest and busiest in the Archdiocese. There are more than thirty people involved who

respond weekly to requests for assistance from people in the neighbourhood. The Society members make over 1000 visits a year to help about 300 families and 450 individuals. The current chair is:

Neila MacDonald – President
Dave O'Connor – Treasurer
Sr. Cecilia MacNeil – Spiritual Advisor

Hope Cottage Supper Group: This group has been in operation since about 1982. Many parishioners assist with preparing and delivering meals twenty-four times a year to Hope Cottage. Current team coordinators are:

Mike Convey
Pam Gasparetto
Diane Sullivan

St. George's Supper Group: Assists in serving Saturday evening meals at St. George's Church approximately once every six weeks.

Paul Anderson
Pat Brewer
Michele and Dan O'Neill
James & Pauline Leppard
Kay Ross
Cecilia Fry
Mike Convey

Parish Event Planning Group: This group gathers to plan events for the parish for the purpose of building community engagement. Regular events are: Annual St. Patrick's Day celebrations and parish Spring and Fall Fairs. Chery Delaney is the Coordinator facilitating the gathering of the group to plan for the year and arrange for rotating event leaders.

Parish Sunday Hospitality Group: This group faithfully prepares refreshments for Sunday after Mass hospitality and conversation.

Elizabeth Sampson
Edward Dailpay
Frank Labecki

The History of St. Patrick's Parish

St. Patrick's has a long history of service to the people of Halifax.

The parish began (unofficially) in the 1830s as a mission parish. At that time, a priest from St. Mary's would come each Sunday to say Mass in a barn located on the corner of Gottingen and Gerrish Streets.

The growing Catholic population in the north end of Halifax continued to be served that way until the early 1840s when a committee, headed by Father Laughnan, was established to identify suitable land for a new church. Within two weeks, Father Laughnan and his committee reported that it had located a valuable property bordered by Brunswick Street and Lockman Street (now Barrington Street). The property, owned by James Nutting, was eventually purchased for about \$1800.

The "first" St. Patrick's Church, a wooden structure of Georgian design, was constructed on this site and opened in 1843. Most consider this to be the official beginning of St. Patrick's Parish. Priests from St. Mary's continued to serve the parish until 1858 when Father Woods was appointed the first parish priest at St. Patrick's.

The first church served the community of St. Patrick's for forty years. In 1883, under the leadership of Archbishop O'Brien, a decision was made to tear down the church and construct a new building on the same site. On December 22, 1885, the "new" church (our current building) was officially opened. Archbishop O'Brien celebrated a Pontifical High Mass assisted by Rev. Mgr. Power, Deacon, Father Curtin, Sub-Deacon, Father Carmody, Assistant Priest, and Father Murphy, as Master of Ceremonies.

The glebe house was built in 1888.

The Casavant organ of St. Patrick's Parish is opus number 91. The organ was purchased for \$5,385 and installed in the church in 1898. The organ is the only three manual instrument built with pneumatic action that is still in its original condition in Canada today. The Royal Canadian College of Organists designated St. Patrick's Casavant a heritage instrument in 2006.

Father E.J. MacCarthy, appointed parish priest in 1896, commissioned the beautiful stained-glass windows in the church by the Bavarian Art Establishment of Franz Mayer & Co. of Munich and New York. Father Gerald Murphy, in 1910, contracted to have a new marble altar installed. The altar is of Rutland statuary marble built by Griffin and Keltie and at that time cost \$5000. The Stations of the Cross were erected about the same time.

On December 6, 1917, disaster struck Halifax with the explosion in the harbor from the collision of two ships. The stained-glass windows on the north wall were blown out and there was also extensive damage to the Barrington Street side of the building. Fortunately, repairs were quickly carried out to the building including replacement of the stained-glass windows.

The inner city of Halifax has experienced many changes over the years and St. Patrick's Parish is now a much smaller faith community. St. Patrick's continues to be a vibrant faith community serving the people of the inner city of Halifax, as well as many faithful from across the region. Our community is diverse in background and blessed with many gifts. We are a welcoming faith community with a special ministry to the poor and marginalized. Hope Cottage, founded in 1970 by Fr. Joseph Mills, Pastor of St. Patrick's at that time, reached out to those in need with food and assistance. The Parish has one of busiest St. Vincent de Paul Conferences, founded in 1867, in the Archdiocese, reaching out to many needy people in the neighbourhood. The congregation participates actively with the neighbourhood churches during the Palm Sunday procession. As well, parishioners visit the local senior citizens homes and deliver Communion to shut-ins.

St. Patrick's Church was registered as a Provincial Heritage Building in the 1980s.