



Study outlines St. Olave's economic impact on the community

It has long been said that St. Olave's punches above its weight, and at last we have the proof! According to a recent HALO study, we have an annual economic impact of more than \$800,000.

The HALO study is modelled on research from Partners for Sacred Places, a Philadelphia study that measures the socio-economic value that worship spaces bring to communities. Mike Wood Daly, a former Degree Administrator and research associate with the Toronto School of Theology, established a similar study for Canada so that policy makers and Christian think tanks would have reliable information on what churches do, and the value they have to their surrounding communities. Since June 2016, Wood Daly and students from Ryerson University have looked at 80 congregations across several faiths and denominations.

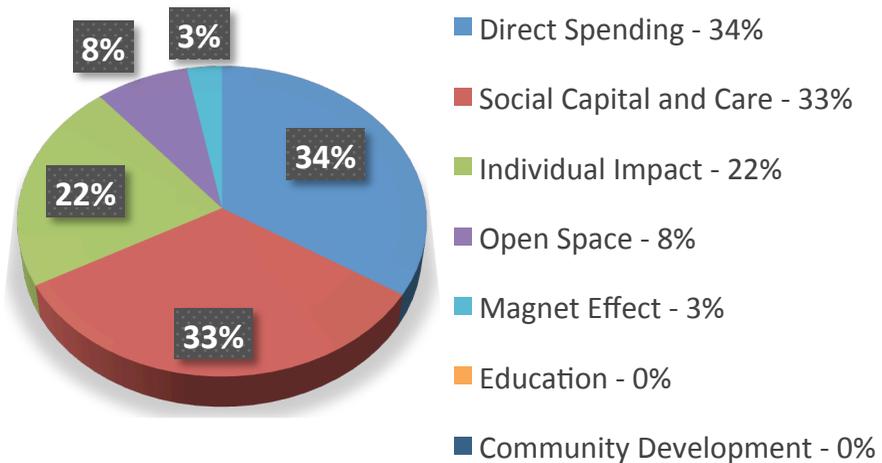
This dollar value is derived from combining things like direct spending in the community (by way of salaries and operating expenses), the value of making our space available at no or below market cost, and the economic value of the volunteer hours carried out by both St. Olave's folk as well as people volunteering for other organizations in our building (8,533 hours per year). When you add it all up, it comes to \$807,776.

That's an average of \$8,146 per parishioner, 46% higher than the national average, says Wood Daly, who presented the HALO findings March 17 after church. "That is a significant figure for a church your size." Many people were surprised to learn this figure was so much higher than the national average.

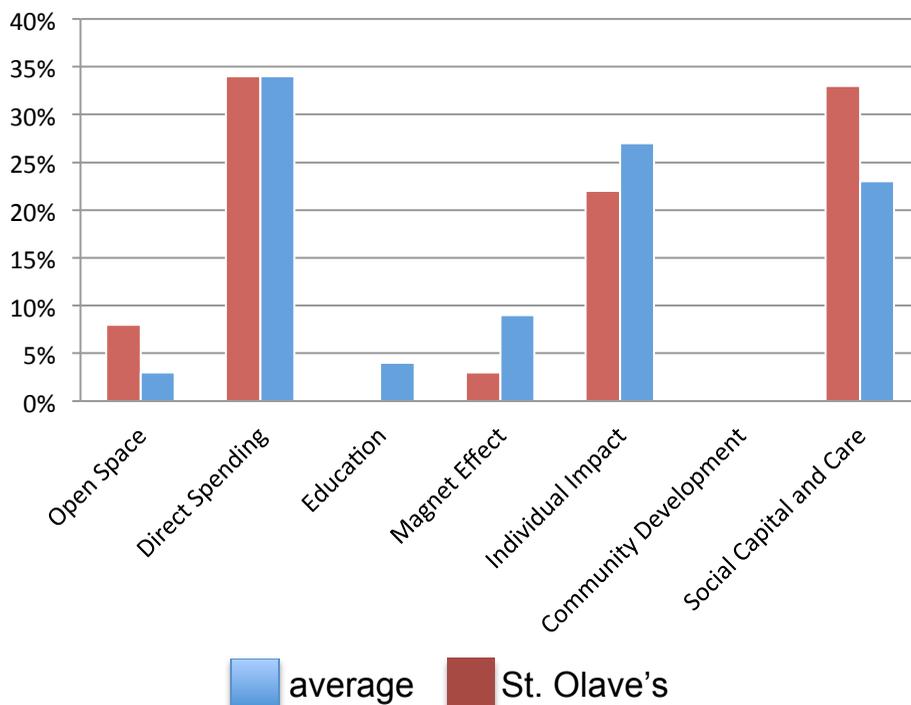
The HALO study looked at seven areas of impact:

1. **Direct spending** – salaries and expenses
2. **Social capital and care** – supporting programs that nurture people in the community
3. **Individual impact** – volunteer opportunities for St. Olave’s parishioners, as well as enabling other organizations who offer volunteer opportunities
4. **Open space** – our parking lot, green space and gardens
5. **Magnet effect** – based on postal codes of parishioners, our core “membership” is from within a 10 km range. However, we don’t collect postal codes from people who come to Evensongs, craft shows, art tours or concerts
6. **Education** – using church for daycare or private school, which doesn’t apply to St. Olave’s
7. **Community development** – initiatives such as affordable housing, also not applicable

St. Olave’s Halo Results



St. Olave's compared to average



While our **Direct Spending** was on par with the 30 other congregations in the cohort, our results in **Open Space** and **Social Capital and Care** were much higher than the HALO average, confirming what we know: that St. Olave's is a place that cares, not only for the people in its pews but the people outside the walls.

Wood Daly suggests that if we can begin to think of ourselves as economic catalysts when we think about our mission, "we can contribute to the common good of people in ways we hadn't before imagined."

Wood Daly asks, what can we do with these numbers?

- ✓ **Examine the zero impact areas** - Are there ways of expanding or introducing elements in Magnet Effect, Education and Community Development that would help to increase the parish's presence in the community even more?
- ✓ **Build on congregational strengths** - In our case, we have the strongest impact in the area of Social Capital and Care. Are there ways we can reflect on and expand the ministries that contribute to this area of impact?
- ✓ **Share the good news** - Are members of the parish aware of how much volunteer time people actually contribute? And even more, aware of what capacity it creates for other members of the community to act as volunteers? Letting people know may spur others to act, and encourage those who are already volunteering.

KEEP IN MIND... when we take our results into account, we need to remember the demographics of our neighbourhood and not make any assumptions:

- 13% of our community residents live below the poverty line
- 40% of renters pay more than 30% of their income on shelter costs
- 16% of neighbourhood families are led by single parents
- The last five years has shown a 30% rise in the number of 5- to 9-year-olds and a 72% rise in the number of 65- to 69-year-olds.

**demographics based on former ward census data*