

WHAT SAINT OLAVE'S MEANS TO ME



Edited by Jim Shapland
Designed by Aden Shapland

FOREWORD

From January 2018 and continuing monthly to a conclusion in December 2020, your "For the Love of St. Olave's" stewardship committee published a series of "testimonials" – short contributions written by our parishioners and clergy under the banner of "What St. Olave's Means to Me."

It may have been one of the most successful communications initiatives we have ever tried. They are truly a remarkable and fascinating collection of essays — with nostalgic trips down memory lane, stories of welcome and belonging, moving faith journeys and many expressions of love for our church.

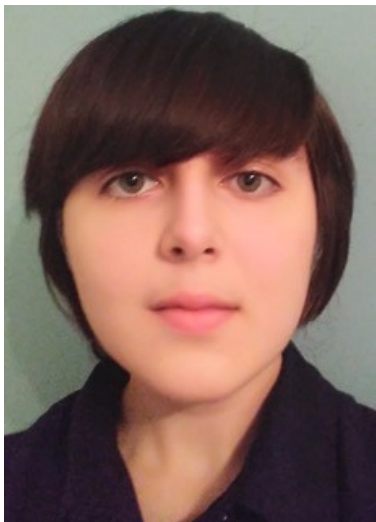
We have now assembled them all here for your continued reference and enjoyment. (You may also view them online at stolaves.ca/what-st-olaves-means.)

Jim Shapland

Member, For the Love of St. Olave's Stewardship Committee

November 2021

ADEN SHAPLAND



“ST. OLAVE’S
IS AN
AMAZING
PLACE.”

I’m only 13 years old, but I still wish to express my feelings to you about St. Olave’s church. To start things off, I’d like to say I strongly support the things that the ‘For The Love of St. Olave’s’ committee does. My father’s involved, and he’s told me a lot about what happens in it – mostly things to help the church survive and thrive.

‘St. Olave’s means the world to me’ was the saying on a set of St. Olave’s t-shirts a few years back, and the phrase sums up how I feel. I’ve been going here my whole life, and I joined the choir two years ago (it’s really great, by the way, you really should hear it).

I mean it when I say that St. Olave’s is an amazing place.

(written in 2018)



THE REV'D DR. SCHUYLER BROWN

“ST. OLAVE’S
HAS GIVEN
ME SAFE
HARBOUR.”



The Anglican Church of St. Olave's is a miracle. It has held fast to the twin pillars of the English Reformation: the Book of Common Prayer and the King James Version of the Bible. It has a vibrant programme of Religious Education, focused on Anglican history and tradition. It is a warm, open community, “where seldom is heard a discouraging word.”

Finding St. Olave's, after the amalgamation of the Church of the Good Shepherd, has given me a safe harbour, for which I am most grateful to God.

St. Olave's welcomed Schuyler as Honorary Assistant in 2016. He led a monthly Bible Study and Eastertide discussion series until his death in August 2021.



BEV JARVIS



“HERE WE
CAN GROW
IN THE
LORD.”

St. Olave's has always been home to me. Many psalms speak of God's provision for a refuge, meeting place, or home to abide in. (*Psalms 90:1-2, Psalm 91:1-2*). Since my parents, grandparents, relatives and friends were active here, in Church and Scouting, I was blessed to grow up in a loving and lively "home."

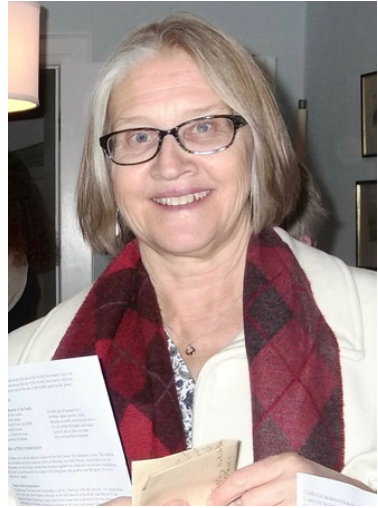
Once called a "cradle Anglican," I was fortunate to celebrate Baptism (1930), Sunday school, confirmation and marriage (1955) at St. Olave's. It has been a vibrant journey for me surrounded by treasured friends, beautiful liturgy, (ie The Book of Common Prayer), music, creativity and Bible-centred learning. One can appreciate how to "Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness" through our precious sacraments.

St. Olave's is an ideal place to experience this Beauty within lovely architecture, with dear friends, surrounded by heavenly music. Here we can grow in the Lord, and find ourselves in the Family of God.



CATHY HUTCHEON

“I CAN RETURN
HERE AGAIN
AND AGAIN.”



I don't remember not being immersed in liturgy. Throughout my childhood in Wales, words that were familiar, but not necessarily understood, unfolded their mystery.

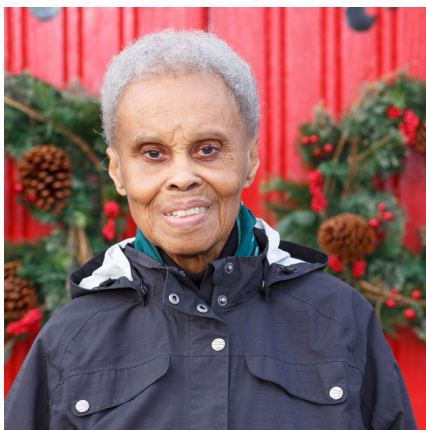
At the heart of these words was the presence and love of Jesus, Son of the Living God.

Life has since been a tapestry of joys and sorrow, quotidian routines and adventure, confusion and clarity. I've wandered and come 'home' more times that I care to admit.

This brings me to the nub of what St Olave's means to me. Three thousand miles from my starting point, and moving into my senior years, I can return here again and again to those oh so familiar words. Sometimes still, understanding unfolds. Love always does!



SHEILA TAIT, ODT



“ST. OLAVE’S
GIVES ME
THE IDEAL
OPPORTUNITY
FOR WORSHIP,
FELLOWSHIP,
LEARNING AND
SERVICE.”

On the day that my parents and I moved into the neighbourhood, my father went for a walk “to reconnoitre” and announced the discovery of an Anglican Church within walking distance. And so began our association with St. Olave’s. As staunch Anglicans in Jamaica, both my parents were highly involved members of two parishes including one with the third oldest church (founded 1671, present building erected 1715 with an organ dated from 1867 and said to be the oldest in the Commonwealth Caribbean.)

The “comfortable words” of the Book of Common Prayer made the integration in St. Olave’s seamless. My parents appreciated the hospitality of and involvement in a ‘community’ church. They understood and we discussed the necessity for consistent financial contribution and support, the continuing demands of maintaining a historical beautiful building and the need for good stewardship.

I treasure the liturgy, the variety of religious experiences, the music, evensong, Lenten and other series, the outreach to and inclusion of other congregations, our parishioners and the ministry and fellowship of faith-filled women.

St. Olave’s gives me the ideal opportunity for worship, fellowship, learning and service.



JANICE DOUGLAS & MARTHA DRAKE



“OUR FRIENDSHIP
WEARS THE
ANGLICAN
CHURCH
AROUND ITS
SHOULDERS.”

Our friendship first took root as kids at St. John the Evangelist in London. Through the years we would run into each other around the city but in May of 1987 we found ourselves together at a French immersion program in Trois-Pistoles, Quebec.

Both students at Western University, our friendship blossomed that spring as we conjugated regular and irregular verbs, practised the Quebecois tradition of improv and explored the rocky shoreline of the Bas-Saint Laurent region.

Fast forward 10 years to 1997. We were living with our respective husbands in the west end of Toronto. If Martha lays claim to discovering St. Olave's for us, then it is Janice who settled the land, digging in for the long haul! Our children – Katie, Gabbie and Paul – grew up here at St. Olave's, from baptism, Junior Church and Nativity Plays, and were eventually confirmed together. Now we are on the stewardship team together. Our friendship wears the Anglican church around its shoulders like a warm and cozy shawl.



CAROL DRUMMOND

“ST. OLAVE’S
... WON ME
OVER.”



I first came to St. Olave's on the invitation of Dale Allen when I was considering leaving the fundamentalist/evangelical church where I was a very active member. I still wanted the Bible-based teaching and commitment but desired the more worshipful form of Sunday service provided by a good liturgy.

St. Olave's combination of commitment to Book of Common Prayer, Wycliffe trained pastors and community won me over. It has been over 25 years since I switched and St. O's still delivers that Bible-based teaching and worshipful experience.



MICHAEL BALL



“WITHIN JUST A
FEW MINUTES,
I FELT THAT
ST. OLAVE’S
WAS GOING TO
BE MY NEW
HOME.”

St. Olave’s ... my new church home. During the early years of my life I grew up in an active Anglican family where my church was an integral part of my many activities. For various reasons, during my working career, I established another church home and it, again, filled many parts of my life but I still missed my early Anglican roots. About three years ago I decided to search out another church home and visited various Anglican congregations in Toronto, but none provide a good fit for my spiritual needs.

A year ago, I walked in the front door of St. Olave’s where a greeter met me with a warm smile even though I was a stranger. My pew contained the familiar Book of Common Prayer and Hymnal from my earlier years. Suddenly, within just a few minutes, I felt that St. Olave’s was going to be my new home. The service of Holy Communion, the familiar prayers, the music, and blessings poured into my eyes and ears and refreshed me in a way that I have been searching for all this time. The service ended, and Reverend Rob warmly shook my hand, asked my name, and sincerely showed an interest in me. He even offered to visit me in my home, to learn more about my life, my journeys and he helped to cement my feelings of finally being part of a new church home.



DALE ALLEN



“ST. OLAVE’S
ANGLICAN
CHURCH IS
FAMILY.”

My mother and I experienced our first Sunday morning service at St. Olave’s in September 1984.

The service was straight out of the Book of Common Prayer and the Bible readings were from the King James version. The Reverend Reg Rose preached a very good sermon. Mom and I were both “cradle Anglicans” with a deep appreciation of the BCP. When the service concluded, we decided that St. Olave’s would be our new church home.

After the service, long-time member Gladys Kirk welcomed us to St. O’s and invited us to join in the mini-golf and barbecue that afternoon. I went with Gladys and a few others to the event. That was the beginning of a number of wonderful friendships that have just grown stronger through the years.

The BCP and Biblical teaching has kept me attending the very meaningful worship services almost every Sunday since.

St. Olave’s is a family church.
St. Olave’s Anglican Church IS family.



JIM SHAPLAND



“ST. OLAVE’S
HAS SERVED
AND
CONTINUES TO
BE THERE FOR
US TO THIS
DAY.”

I am grateful to St. Olave’s for many things, particularly for the ministry it has given to our family. Over the years we have leaned on it many times.

I’ll pass along a little story. I would hesitate to elevate it into the ranks of a miracle, but there may have been higher forces involved. It also says a lot about reinforcing a belief in the power of prayer.

Here goes. Back on a Sunday morning in May 2015, my late wife, Nancy became quite ill. It may have had something to do with belated grief from losing our daughter, Meaghan, a year before.

Nancy was having great difficulty with her breathing. I got her to Humber River Hospital, and she was immediately taken into their ER. Just to give you a sense of how serious the problem was, a normal person registers an exhalation reading of about 400. Nancy was struggling to reach 120!

During the course of Sunday afternoon, they administered to her large amounts of antibiotics and steroids. These

considerably improved her ability to breathe, but the medication had a serious side effect. She completely lost the use of her extremities. She couldn't use her arms and hands to feed herself. She couldn't support herself on her feet. Totally immobilized and bedridden.

Monday morning, when I visited her in her room, there was no change in her condition. During the course of the day, she kept asking for a visit from David (our former Rector, Reverend David Burrows), and she wanted him to bring 'his oils' (the anointing oils). I was able to arrange a visitation with David late Monday afternoon, and at her bedside he performed the short service of anointing from the BCP. On the drive home, David told me that over the course of his 30 years in the priesthood, he had visited many sick people in hospitals. However, he had never encountered anyone sicker than Nancy. That night, I knew that we were in serious trouble – very dire straights. The only thing I could think to do was to pray for her, which I fervently did a number of times.

Forward, then, to Tuesday morning. When I reached her floor in the hospital, to my great surprise (and delight), Nancy came down the hall walking behind her walker – as bright and feisty as ever. She was discharged on the Wednesday afternoon, and began a long but steady recovery to better health.

Some two years later Nancy and I would find ourselves in an ambulance again en route to the same hospital. Much to my astonishment, our new rector, Rev'd Rob, made it to the hospital BEFORE us, there to provide support.

So that's my story. Couldn't make it up. A testimonial for the power of prayer and how St. Olave's has served and continues to be there for us to this day.



DON WESTON



“I AM GRATIFIED
TO SEE SO MANY
PARISHIONERS,
BOTH LONG-
TIME AND NEW,
ANSWERING
THE CALL
TO GIVE.”

It was in January, 1985, that my wife Karen and I moved into Bloor West Village. We had arrived from Kingston, after a very short time there and were looking to join a new church community. We did attend a couple of services at a number of churches, but found ourselves pulled back to St. Olave's. I recall attending the Vestry Meeting and being impressed with the continued commitment to the wellbeing of the congregation.

And after 33 years, we are still members. I did have a couple of periods when other priorities pulled me away but in the end, St. Olave's was my spiritual anchor. Over the years, I've served as a Warden a couple of times, handling the Property portfolio, was a Sunday School teacher and provide occasional handyman support. And our daughter was married at St. Olave's! While all this was happening, my concerns about the future of St. Olave's increased with attendance dropping and continued deficit budgeting.

A couple of years ago, we were able to attract a new Incumbent and I noticed things started to perk up. One of the many tools that Rob brought with him was the Stewardship Program that had been implemented at his former location. He asked if I would lead such a program at St. Olave's. At first, I was hesitant as I had seen the historic picture of our declining financial position and I was very concerned that such a program might just be a little too late.

But with an awesome team of volunteers from within the congregation, we launched the program 15 months ago. And the results have been amazing! I am gratified to see so many parishioners, both long-time and new, answering the call to give. This renewed spirit of generosity will allow St. Olave's to continue to be a light of Christ in the Swansea community and beyond for years, even decades ahead.

Being a member of a church community isn't just about coming to the occasional service. It has the possibility of being so much more. It is the words spoken from the pulpit, it is the readings and joining in with the prayers. It is the maintaining of the traditional Anglican service with the BCP. It is the wonderful music and the sound of the organ. And it is being a part of a vibrant community.

I am excited about our future together. And I plan on being there!



ROBERT RAGSDALE, ODT

“I FEEL VERY
CONFIDENT THAT
ST. OLAVE’S WILL
CONTINUE TO
FLOURISH WITH
THE HELP OF AN
ALREADY
GROWING
CONGREGATION.”



Let me count the ways. When Bette and I came to Toronto as newlyweds in the early '50s and settled in a little apartment on South Kingsway, we went about to find a welcoming church hopefully similar to the ones we had been brought up in. We discovered it almost immediately in St. Olave's.

The church itself – beautiful Gothic architecture, columns soaring skyward to the heavens; interior traditional design, beautiful in its simplicity and plainness, without all the distracting wall decorations and plaques found in so many churches. A house of worship where you can sit quietly and actually feel the presence of Our Lord and creator, Jesus Christ. The liturgy – our King James version of the prayer book, with its unparalleled mediaeval language in which there is a precise word for every meaning or situation, and which gives the worshipper a real opportunity to partake in the service rather than just being a spectator.

And then the parishioners – the building full of vibrant enthusiastic Christian souls, really a “church family” always ready to welcome and assist newcomers to their midst. We found in our 60-odd years of membership, no lack of opportunities to help in doing the Lord’s work in so many ways as well as enjoy the warm fellowship of others, many of whom became life-long friends.

And the leadership – clergy who not only were good pastors, but also had the special talents required during some rather turbulent times in our history. Canon Sextus Stiles, business-oriented and builder of the parish; Rev. Dr. Versey Wigmore, intellectual, yet very humble, and a great pastor and erudite preacher during a time when people were becoming very apathetic about religion; Rev. Reg Rose, a friendly Maritimer, extemporaneous speaker who extended our vision outward to include Anglican Houses and Wilkinson House to rescue young people from the streets; and Rev. David Burrows, who carried us into the 21st century, particularly with his social skills in helping the homeless street people directly with food, clothing and Christianity. And with our newest incumbent, the Rev. Rob Mitchell, I feel very confident that St. Olave’s Anglican Church will continue to flourish with the help of an already growing congregation.

These are some of the reasons I love St. Olave’s and why I would encourage everyone to join in and help spread the Word. It always provides a great feeling of accomplishment as well.



THE REV'D DIANA SPENCER



“IT IS A JOY AND
PRIVILEGE TO
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‘THE BLESSED
COMPANY OF
ALL FAITHFUL
PEOPLE’ IN A
CHURCH LIKE
ST. OLAVE’S.”

I have been asked contribute to the series What St. Olave's Means to Me, and my response is that it is not only a church where I can feel at home, in the company of loving, faithful, Christian people, and with them encounter God in prayer and worship, in the peace and beauty of its familiar liturgy and inspiring music, but I also value St. Olave's because it stands in the tradition of what I believe a church should be. As the Rector has said, “we love St. Olave's, but St. Olave's loves too” — it is a parish which has “great love for its members and community,” and, in fact, it has been described as “the best parish in the diocese!”

I value St. Olave's, too, because it perpetuates the faith and understanding of generations before us, in part through its use of the Book of Common Prayer. The “Solemn Declaration of 1893” (page viii), summarizes its aim to “transmit the same unimpaired to our posterity.” Although its language is sometimes old-fashioned, the BCP contains truths that can sometimes be lost in modern liturgies. I wish that there were more Prayer Book churches!

It is a joy and privilege to be part of “the blessed company of all faithful people” in a church like St. Olave’s, which provides for us spiritual solace and inspiration, together with the human contact and friendship which hold us together in the love of God in the Body of Christ, and for this we give thanks to God.



ERIC HEWITT



“IT REALLY
IS A
PRIVILEGE
TO BE A
MEMBER
OF THIS
PARISH.”

During my first day as a member of St. Olave's parish I was welcomed kindly. This warm greeting made me feel that I wanted to become involved in the church. Throughout my time at St. Olave's, I have come to think of it as my second home. I love attending and helping at church events and services such as the Christmas Craft Show and Evensong.

Sunday services provide an opportunity to gather one's thoughts and to listen to the word of God. Along with delightful services, it is pleasing to know that this parish is committed to helping the less fortunate through its donations. It really is a privilege to be a member of this parish.

St. Olave's provides a safe space in which one can be themselves with the knowledge that one is accepted for who they are.



BILL WILSON

“I CAN’T WAIT
TO SEE THE
BRIGHT
FUTURE THIS
WONDERFUL
HOUSE OF
GOD HOLDS.”



St. Olave's has been a parish I've known all my life.

When I was little, we were members of St. Jude's Anglican on Roncesvalles. Each week when we drove to church along Bloor Street from our house in Etobicoke, we would always pass St. Olave's and our parents would tell us about some of the churches on the way to Sunday service.

The rector of St. Jude's was the Rev'd Canon Warren Turner, whose grandson David Harrison was the rector at St. Mary Magdalene. David's paternal grandparents, Ralph and Ruby Harrison, were long-time parishioners of St. Olave's and I even attended both their funeral services here. David and I had a very lovely Sunday school teacher, Margaret Roze. Yes, the very Margaret Roze who attends St. Olave's. Feel free to ask Margaret how "good" a boy I was in Sunday school. It's always lovely to see Margaret each week here!

St. Jude's closed in June 1977 due to a decline in parishioners. Our family lived a kilometre from All Saints Kingsway and decided to attend there, and stayed a good number of years there. I was confirmed there and sang in the parish choir for 38.5 years. After retiring from St. Olave's, All Saints was happy to have the Rev'd Canon Versey Wigmore and his wife start attending. Versey assisted in services there, too.

I started singing at St. Olave's in June 2017 and was hired as the regular (and, primarily, only bass) for the wonderful choir here that fall.

One major part of attracting me to St. Olave's was the Book of Common Prayer. I have always loved the BCP. It is simply part of my DNA. I want to thank the members of the choir, clergy and parishioners for making me feel so welcome here at St. Olave's. It truly is a welcoming family parish and I can't wait to see the bright future this wonderful house of God holds.



JUDY BEAL



“FROM OUR
EARLIEST VISITS,
I HAVE ALWAYS
KNOWN THAT
THIS IS A PLACE
WHERE I
BELONG.”

Most of the members of St. Olave's congregation know me as Church Secretary, but I was a member of the congregation long before Rev'd David Burrows and the Wardens of the day – Robert Ragsdale and the late John Damery – hired me to work in the church office. St. Olave's is where my family has gathered for some of the most important days of our lives – Baptisms, Confirmations, a Wedding, a Funeral, and even the Blessing of our pets.

Over the years, I have enjoyed volunteer opportunities as a member of the Faith and Fellowship (Young Adults) Group, Mary and Martha Group, Nursery care-giver, Sunday School teacher, Servers' Guild, Arts Guild, ACW Executive, Growth Committee, and as a Congregational Reader. Serving the Lord through these activities, I have been blessed with many happy memories and treasured friendships.

What does St. Olave's mean to me? One word comes immediately to mind. HOME. Webster's Dictionary defines home as “a place one holds dear because of personal feelings or relationships; a place of security and comfort.” I am truly grateful for everything St. Olave's has meant to me, and my family, for more than 35 years. From our earliest visits, I have always known that this is where I belong; and I am thankful for the warm and sincere welcome that resulted in us becoming members of a wonderful church family. St. Olave's is HOME.



LES KUEBLER



“IT’S A
PLACE
WHERE
YOU
CAN BE
YOURSELF.”

I go to St. Olave’s because everyone there is just like one big family. Ever since I can remember people at St. Olave’s have been kind and welcomed me. Whether you know the name of the person or not, they are always kind and smiling. There are so many opportunities at St. Olave’s like meeting new people and learning new things. It’s a place where you can be yourself.

My mom, her brother and my grandparents went to St. Olave’s after they immigrated to Canada. Then, my Nana (my mom’s mom) started the Nativity play. My mom has been going here ever since, and I have been raised to go here too. I have basically been part of St. Olave’s all my life, and I was baptised here!

Getting to take part in the Nativity play and Junior Church activities are some of my favourite parts about St. Olave’s, because no matter what you are doing you know that it is going to be fun. At Sunday school during Christmas season we practise the Nativity play. One of my favourite parts about the Nativity play is seeing which role you get, and seeing your costume for the first time.

Some of my other favourite activities are our annual Skating Party, Game Night which is super fun because you get to play board games with all your friends and family, our annual Easter egg hunt which takes place on the lawn and the Christmas bazaar. The Christmas bazaar is an exciting bazaar held in the church. You can bring family and friends to enjoy the experience with you.

Another thing I enjoy doing is greeting. I love handing out the books to everyone and greeting them. I also love bringing toys down to the fire hall with Junior Church because I know that they will be going to kids that don't have any toys. I enjoy many more things too like the BBQ and doing activities outside, but there are just too many to name. So this is just a piece of how much fun you can have at St. Olave's!

On Sundays I look forward to coming to church because of all the fun I have. I get to learn so many new items about God and Jesus at Sunday school. We also play many different games, and sing songs with Brittany (and Martha and Laura before), our awesome Sunday school teacher. You can never get bored at St. Olave's because there is always a way to help out, or a fun activity taking place.

Here I have really learned lots about God, but also how to be a part of one big family.



WILLIAM COWLING

“ST. OLAVE’S
IS A WARM,
FRIENDLY,
WELCOMING
PARISH THAT
OFFERS DEEP
SPIRITUAL
ENRICHMENT.”



I found to my surprise, soon after arriving in Toronto, that unlike many clergy who visit the sick, the Rector of the day at St. Olave’s also visited the healthy.

I had just moved on my own from the Montreal area in 1981 and had chosen to live in Swansea, so I tried out the local parish church. Shortly afterwards, the Reverend Dr. Verschoyle Wigmore offered to come round. This was most welcome for a newcomer to the area.

I greatly appreciated the fact that all the services used the Book of Common Prayer and a good proportion were Morning Prayer, at a time when many parishes were dropping the Prayer Book and moving to Holy Communion for practically all of their services.

I was also interested in reading Bible lessons (as I had some experience announcing at the university radio station). I soon found that in those days it was necessary to join the Servers Guild, so I volunteered.

I met my wife Debbie on a train at Thanksgiving weekend in 1986. When we married within a year, it was naturally at St. Olave's. We were able to invite Dr. Giles Bryant to provide the music for the wedding service. The delicious food was catered by the parish. Later on, our daughters, Angela and Louisa, were each baptised there by the Reverend Reginald Rose, participated in Junior Church and were confirmed there by the Reverend David Burrows.

In 1994 we moved to the Kingsway, where we still live after 25 years. We did consider the two closest Anglican churches (as our house is equidistant from each}, but both seemed to be in transition in their types of services. St. Olave's was not much further away, so we continued there.

In late 1995, Jim Shapland nominated me to replace him as the Religious Education Co-ordinator. There was considerable flexibility to experiment in designing and implementing a wider range of programming. The interim priest in charge, the Reverend Stephen Oliver, immediately approved the Short Service of Morning Prayer on Communion Sundays at 10 in the Chapel, which [until the pandemic] is still running to this day.

I believed it was important to reach out to people from outside the parish and beyond the Anglican community, to build up the participant numbers and to help save the Prayer Book. I suggested a package of up to two hours, comprising Evensong, food and a major feature with education, information and/or entertainment components. I felt that, as well as talking about the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer, it was important to offer experiential learning, through Prayer Book services, as well as illustrated music features and live performances. This was a much broader definition of religious education than most parishes offer.

The members of the education committee, the advisory board and the new Rector, the Reverend Burrows, were all willing to give it a try, so the first event took place on All Saints Day in 1996. The pattern continued under his direction for nearly 20 years; then with the Reverend Jeffry Kennedy as interim priest in charge; and now with the Reverend Rob Mitchell, who has successfully expanded the programming beyond all our dreams.

So my and my family's experience is that St. Olave's is a warm, friendly, welcoming parish that offers deep spiritual enrichment; that values and builds on many centuries of Christian history and tradition; and that presents a broad variety of services, events and other activities which are entirely fitting for a wide range of people of the 21st century and beyond.



JEAN LILLEY



“THERE IS
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PRESENT SENSE
OF CARING AND
PLEASURE IN
SERVING.”

I have heard that one's life, like a house, needs four supports. For me, worship and service and their benefits provide the best of supports. At St. Olave's worship includes reciting our declaration of faith and participating in beloved prayers with others, tradition being a comfort. I appreciate the time for reflection, putting complexities of life into Christian perspective. The church is a meeting place of people of differing experiences yet is respectful of one another. I also appreciate the atmosphere of humour, warmth and companionship at meetings of the ACW, "Mary and Marthas" and the Second Century Mission Fund.

Which brings me to service. It is a privilege to work with committed volunteers who exude an aura of joy and where thoughtful decisions follow open discussions. Be it committee participation or the dusting of the pews, there is the ever present sense of caring and pleasure in serving.

Many thanks to St. Olave's and all who are a part of it.



GRAYDON MCARTHUR



“I STILL FEEL
10 FEET TALL
EVERY TIME
I LEAVE THE
CHURCH.”

St. Olave's is my home and has been the home of my family since Day 1. It all started out when my great grandmother Ester Howard (née Camplin) walked across the street at The Queensway to attend the first service at the original site down on Windermere. My great uncle, John Howard, was the first Rector's Warden there under Mr. Sparks.

Years later, my grandmother Edna married my grandfather William Coates and in those years, the whole family attended the church. When the church purchased the land at 360 Windermere, my grandfather, a brick layer in the village, walked up daily with his level to make sure the building was being built properly. I'm very familiar with our history here.

My grandfather went on to be the People's Warden for about 24 straight years and was a lay delegate to Synod for few years as well. I learned much from my grandparents and here I am today doing The Lord's work because of their fine examples and dedication.

I was baptized by the Rev'd Sextus Stiles and confirmed and married by the Rev'd Dr. Wigmore. And I hope that when my time comes, the Rev'd Robert Mitchell will be here to preside over my last service at St. Olave's. The teachings from St. Olave's are the very basis of how I live my life.

I love the parish and the congregation and have spent extended periods of time each week a number of years ago, working on functions to grow the congregation and organize social events, fundraisers, dances, picnics and sporting events that everyone could participate in. I do the Easter Egg Hunt and give out candy canes at the Christmas Eve family service each year.

September 2019 marked my 43rd year of being vested and working the services here. To some, I'm a Lay Anointer, to others, I minister to the sick and shut-ins and yet to others, I'm a sociable fellow with a fairly wild sense of humour. The prayer book is very important to me and I take it with me always.

The gothic architecture of the church enhances each and every service, as does the organ. I enjoy each and every service I attend and I always feel the Real Presence during each service. I still feel 10 feet tall, very good and whole every time I leave the church.

St. Olave's is my home, my life, my inspiration and who I am.



GABBIE DOUGLAS



“ST. OLAVE’S
TAUGHT ME
SELFLESSNESS.”

I’m serving soup from the back of a minivan parked in downtown Toronto. I ladle the vegetables swimming in broth into the cups and hand them to people lined up in the bitter cold. I remember the warmth of the soup leaking through my mittens and the warmth it brought others. As I pass out the soup, and the rolls, people thank me and smile.

In that moment I understood the impact of passing warmth. I understood the warmth I feel from helping others. That was one of the times I volunteered to serve soup with the Hunger Patrol, which is run out of St. Olave’s. Each Saturday a handful of individuals make the soup to be served to the homeless. In the closet behind the Ethel Brown Room that connects to the Parish Hall, shelves are spilling with sweaters, pants, mittens, gloves, socks and jackets donated from the community. Each Saturday a bundle of clothing is tossed into the vehicle alongside the big container of soup, some rolls, some sandwiches and anything else that can be prepared and shared. The people were grateful to receive the soup and supplies, and I was grateful to be serving them.

This feeling is one of many things that St. Olave's means to me. It is a place where I spent my youth. A place where I made friendships and a space of community. It was a place for personal growth.

St. Olave's means flipping pancakes alongside parishioners dedicated to ensuring Shrove Sunday celebrations are a success. St. Olave's is a place where I became a confident performer and competent presenter (my sister and I can recite the entire Nativity Play by heart).

It presents an opportunity to become friends with people of all ages and different backgrounds. I remember being partnered with Sheila New in the mystery friends event with the ACW and exchanging letters with her when I was in Grade 9. It means building relationships that survive despite being at school halfway across the country. I'm always happy to participate in Youth Group events organized by Carol Ambler when I return.

St. Olave's taught me selflessness. It taught me to be grateful for the things I have. It has taught me, or rather exposed me, to the invigorating feeling of doing good for someone else, which is something I'll keep trying to do.



ANNIS TEBBUTT

“HERE WE
FOUND
CONNECTION
AND CARING,
SURROUNDED
BY THE BEAUTY
AND
TRADITION
OF ST. OLAVE’S.”



Growing up in Hamilton in the 1950s meant being part of that gigantic cohort, the “baby boomers.” With my brother and sisters, we attended the splendid, newly built St. Michael’s Anglican Church. That church was packed with children and I recall the large Sunday School classes, sitting in rows of desks, just like regular school, and the Junior Auxiliary, where I attempted to learn knitting, along with singing and teamwork.

Like so many in that baby boom generation, however, as I became older I began to question establishment values, including that of the church. Being in full rebellion mode, I often turned to the next new thing, walking down a path that increasingly became darker and more dangerous.

With the arrival of my daughter came responsibility and the desire for a better life, for her to know and for me to know again the love and greatness of God. We came, just by chance, one morning to St. Olave's Church.

Here we found connection and caring, surrounded by the beauty and tradition of St. Olave's. I have celebrated the joys of baptism, confirmation and marriage within its walls. For me, being part of St. Olave's means to belong and to be part of something beyond ourselves. St. Olave's is a community to "give us that due sense of all thy mercies," the love of God distilled through the actions of those serving Him.



PAUL SCRIVENER



“AMAZINGLY IN
OUR SECULAR
WORLD, MY
CHURCH HAS
GROWN
STEADILY.”

I have always been a Prayer Book Anglican. For me, the Prayer Book is based in scripture and has the discipline to provide the key ingredients needed to lead a good Christian life.

When my church was shut down a number of years ago, I set off to find a new church home. Ideally, it had to use the Prayer Book in its core services, offer good music and a friendly, welcoming environment.

For some time, I shopped at five churches, all of which had their strengths. I recalled meeting Rev'd David Burrows (now retired), who was rector at St. Olave's, a Prayer Book parish. The church is a distance from my home but I started to hear good things about St. Olave's and decided to check it out.

St. Olave's has been my church home going on 10 years. It has a smaller but welcoming congregation, excellent music and uses the Prayer Book exclusively. Rev'd Rob Mitchell and his team provide great spiritual leadership. Also, I believe it is important that St. Olave's is taking a leadership role in the community providing space for so many groups that would otherwise find it difficult to manage.

Amazingly in our secular world, my church has grown steadily in the past few years. The management team, of which I am part, has worked hard to keep our church not only beautiful but in good mechanical condition. I am really pleased to be part of the St. Olave's family.



SANDRA FRANKE



“IT IS THIS
CENTRAL
RITUAL OF
CHRISTIANITY
THAT DRAWS
ME TO
ST. OLAVE’S.”

I am eating a thin wafer as it crunches delicately under my teeth, then gradually melting with a little sip of wine. I love the intimacy of the Eucharist. It is like coming home again. My faith is completely in Jesus, in the man as he is today. I may have some doubts about certain paths the church has taken but in the end I am totally enamoured with the mystery of holy communion. And it is this central ritual of Christianity that draws me to St. Olave’s Chapel every Wednesday (after Bible Sunday) and Sunday at 8:30.

Love moves from one being to another. It is emotive and a motion. And yet it is contained within us. The God of Love comes to us each day, he is the bread of life. Does he remind us about where we have gone astray? Never. “If there be anywhere on earth a lover of God who is always kept safe from falling, I know nothing of it – for it was not shown me. But this was shown: that in falling and rising again we are always held close in one love.” (Julian of Norwich, *Enfolded in Love*, p. 55). Why do we “confess our manifold sins and wickedness...”? (BCP, p.77). I prefer to see all that has gone right with the world at this time, celebrating the love within my family, friends and the world, which is mentally what I do.

It is the rising out of falling that connects us to love, to God; it strengthens the bond. Each eucharist could be seen as a completion of love, a rising out of falling where the human being is made whole, growing in depth each week, each year. "Though the soul's wounds heal, the scars remain. God sees them not as blemishes but as honours." (*Julian of Norwich, Enfolded in Love, p. 17*)

Jesus's many miracles are pure acts of the completion of love on earth. He brings the full force of Heaven on earth. The Gospel of John, also known as the Gospel of Love, has one of many New Testament stories about the healing of a blind man. In it the disciples question who has sinned, the man or his parents, that he was born blind. As if an imperfection in a human being was the product of their misbehaviour. Jesus corrects their thinking: "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him" (John 9.1-5, NRSV). Even this hardship of being blind could be considered a gift of love so that Jesus could heal him as a testament to the healing powers of Heaven.

P.S. January 2020 marked my 20th year with St. Olave's Wednesday Bible Study. Attending the group started as a Millennium project but continues to be a source of weekly inspiration.

P.P.S. Atheists are our partners in love.



THE REV'D CANON RUTH SMITH

“I PRAISE AND
THANK GOD
FOR LEADING
ME TO
ST. OLAVE’S.”



St. Olave's is, for me, a sanctuary – a place where I may go in all times of life: primarily in times of joy, sorrow, grief, confusion and peace. It is God's house in Toronto for me.

I grew up in the Church of England tradition, so the Prayer Book services have been part of my life as long as I can remember. That does not mean that I don't care for the expressions of faith in the BAS, I do. But the BCP has been part of my being as long as I can remember, and the words are engraved on my heart. I enjoy praising God in the words of hymns I am familiar with, and tunes that I can share in the worship Services without reference to books and page numbers!

I enjoy the fellowship of the ACW, and of times when we get together for worship and fellowship. The 'seasons' of the Church have long been part of my worship, and there is a special joy when a seasonable hymn is particularly familiar.

When all is said and done, I praise and thank God for leading me to St. Olave's.



TRIS JACOBS



“I AM PROUD,
HAPPY AND
GRATEFUL TO
CALL THE
PARISHIONERS
AT ST. OLAVE’S
MY CHURCH
FAMILY.”

When I was putting together this article, I thought about the definition of “family,” so I consulted my dictionary. It offered several possibilities – children of the same biological parents, a group of people living together with common ancestry, and (most startling) people united in committing criminal activity!

Since none of these came close to describing a church family, I decided to add my own definition: a group of people, diverse in their background and lifestyle, united by faith in a common bond of love and worship. It is this sense of community that I found at St. Olave’s.

I came here six years ago at the invitation of John Stephenson, my dear friend of 20 years, to add an alto voice to the choir. I was attracted to the quality of the music programme here, and I also found spiritual nourishment in the Book of Common Prayer. I loved the majesty of its language and its connection to the ancient Church.

Even more importantly, I have met some of the kindest people it has been my privilege to know. Of course, like any family, we have divergences of opinion and lively discussions on those differences, but love and respect have always informed those discussions.

So, in summary, those qualities in St. Olave's that have brought me here have kept me here. I am proud, happy and grateful to call the parishioners at St. Olave's my church family.



BETTE BIRMINGHAM

“ST. OLAVE’S
IS A RICH
BLESSING
IN MY LIFE.”



My association with St. Olave's goes back a long way. When I was 21 Gladys Kirk (then deaconess at Grace Church-on-the-Hill where I was a member) introduced me to the evening Lent programmes and special services at St. Olave's. In 1963 I moved to Port Credit but I continued to attend these services. The priests (Rev'd Wigmore and Rev'd Rose) and parishioners were very welcoming and friendly. They made me feel as if I really belonged to the St. Olave's Church family.

When in 1997 I moved back to Toronto, to the Swansea area, I became a member of St. Olave's. At first I was not a very active person. Mostly St. Olave's was my place of Sunday worship, my "comfortable pew." For many years I enjoyed just being a part of the Prayer Book services in the beauty and serenity of such a warm, welcoming, beautiful Church, and going for lunch after the service with the "lunch bunch." I still attend the Lent programmes.

One of the many blessings I received from St. Olave's is my friendship with the Powell family. That all started when Jessie decided that I should help her organize a "mini caravan" to raise money for St. Olave's. We did this three years in a row, with several members of the congregation manning a booth from the country of their heritage, providing a pot luck supper and entertainment. I can still picture Louise and Lawrence Rennie doing Scottish dancing on the stage!

I joined the Greeters group where I had the privilege of working with, and getting to know, David Pickering, Tom Elliott and Sheila Tait. As a greeter one meets so many of the wonderful people who attend St. Olave's. I now have the privilege of working with Judy Sher as my partner.

When Rev'd Burrows needed a treasurer for the Hunger Patrol I decided that was something I could do. David accepted me and I enjoyed doing this service until he retired. Today I am the treasurer of St. Olave's ACW which keeps me active helping to raise money to assist with the upkeep of this beautiful Church and for Outreach. Joining the Mary and Martha group was another blessing.

Do I really know what St. Olave's, with its Gothic beauty, wonderful organ, glorious stained glass windows, historic font, prayer book services and warm friendly people really means to me? Well, in the past two months [of the pandemic] I think we have all come to know much more clearly what our beloved St. Olave's means to us! I know I certainly have!

I MISS MY CHURCH FAMILY – singing together; praying together; listening to the sermons; greeting each other with a smile, a handshake and yes, if you know Dale, even a hug! I miss the smiles that go across the church aisles between parishioners. I miss seeing the children running up the aisle to sit for their story. I miss the coffee hours where I get to chat with people I would otherwise not know. I miss our ACW executive meetings and the support we give each other. I miss the Mary and Martha meetings. I miss the smiles and greetings I get from the Addus group as I pass through their area during the week. I even miss cleaning up after the Evensong suppers! I miss all of you!

Yes, I worship at home, thanks to the brilliant modern technology of today and the dedication of Rev'd Rob, Rev'd Alexandra and our Wardens, but it is not quite the same. I don't have that same feeling of spiritual peace surrounding me! I don't experience that warm feeling of love and fellowship surrounding me! My Mother once told me that we can worship God anywhere and she was right. But I will be so happy and grateful to get back to the warm "comfortable pews" of my beloved St. Olave's and be able to worship with my Christian family again.

St. Olave's is a rich Blessing in my life. It is my Spiritual home. It is my large Christian Family! It is my Strength!



JANICE DOUGLAS



"I'M
GRATEFUL
TO BE ABLE
TO GROW
WITH
ST. OLAVE'S."

Some of you may recall that I partnered with Martha Drake two years ago to contribute a reflection to this project. But since the pandemic started, forcing our beloved church to close, I find myself thinking a lot about what St. Olave's means to me. So with your indulgence, I'm taking another run at it.

St. Olave's is a place to grow.

Our family grew here. Craig and I joined St. Olave's as newlyweds. I started singing with the choir and my fellow choristers feted me with baby showers for both Katie and Gabbie. You can't imagine how special and welcome that made us feel. Overwhelmed really.

As my participation in St. Olave's grew from singing in the choir, to helping in Junior Church, to serving as a Warden, my love for this place grew along with it. Our family has so many friendships that were planted in the pews, but grew far outside the church walls.

I also observed a growing list of parishioners and clergy give so freely of themselves – role models if you will. Following in their footsteps I find great satisfaction in organizing events, coming up with new ways to reach the community, and sharing the joy of St. Olave's with others.

But in recent years, Rob+ and now Alexandra+ have helped my attachment to St. Olave's grow from one rooted in the busyness of church, to one also rooted in faith. Even though we can't pray together during our favourite liturgies, I can still worship God, either by watching the services (which our family still does together every Sunday at 10:30) or by praying on my own. Or by planting a garden.

In this uncertain "in-between time" as Rob calls it, I'm grateful to be able to grow with St. Olave's.



THE REV'D ALEXANDRA STONE

“I CAN'T
THINK OF
A BETTER
PLACE
TO BE
SERVING
MY TITLE.”



It's hard to believe it's been just over a year since I started my curacy at St. Olave's.

In some ways, it feels much shorter than that. They say that time flies when you're having fun, but these past 13 months have been more than just fun. I think it's fair to say that time flies when you're doing exciting ministry. From conversations about faith and spiritual practices, to teaching, to the many ways St. Olave's reaches out beyond our walls, it's been a tremendous joy to serve in this community that God has so richly blessed with the gifts of faith, hospitality and true generosity of spirit.

One of my fondest memories from the last year is a moment at the end of the Christmas Community Meal. It happened long after the rush of the meal itself. The guests had departed, and we were busy with the task of cleaning up.

As I walked past the door to the kitchen, where probably the 200th plate was being washed, the sound I heard was laughter. As tired as we were, at the end of the day, the parish hall was still ringing with the joy of serving side-by-side.

At the same time, I sometimes feel like I've been here much longer, which is a testament to how welcoming St. Olave's is. From the moment I arrived for my interview, I could feel the warmth and open-heartedness of this community. All of this is God's love in action.

I can't think of a better place to be serving my title, as they say in the Church of England. And I can't think of a place I'd rather have been when the world changed overnight, and the buildings closed, and we had to start doing everything at a safe distance. It's been a great challenge, and I miss everyone. But the support and encouragement of the leadership and the community have allowed me to face this strange time with more courage than I otherwise might have. It's a constant reminder that God's grace surrounds us no matter what occurs.

This, and much more, is what St. Olave's means to me.



SUE HARRIS



“I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN DRAWN TO THE SENSE OF COMMUNITY OUR CHURCH OFFERS.”

St. Olave's has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. I attended Sunday school here, I sang in the junior choir and met here for Brownies and Girl Guides. I was confirmed here, and even when my attendance became less regular, I still came out for the bazaars and rummage sales or other ACW events my Mum told me about. Even in my teenage years I don't think I ever missed a candlelight service. I got married here and all my children were baptized here. When the twins were little and started referring to the pageant as "The Baby Jesus Show" I decided that it was high time for them to start going to Sunday school. It never occurred to me to take them anywhere besides St. Olave's.

There were certainly churches that were closer, but I liked the idea of them going to the same church that I had...a church where I was comfortable. In those days there were several Junior Church classes (split by age) and I was more than happy to help in the Nursery and with teaching. Now all my kids have gone to Junior Church and performed in the pageants and been confirmed here.

The BCP service provides continuity and a sense of tradition which I value, yet I'm also pleased to see the way the church has evolved in the 50+ years I've attended. I have always been drawn to the sense of community our church offers and appreciate its inclusivity. Our tireless volunteer parishioners are constantly looking for areas in which to improve the services offered to the community. These improvements can be seen in everything from increased accessibility to the standard of musical offerings. Since John took the reins as Musical Director, the choral performances have reached a whole new level. My husband, who grew up singing with choirs that toured Europe, considers him to be among the best choir-masters he has worked with. High praise from a Hungarian!

The bottom line is that St. Olave's has always been around when we needed it and I never questioned that it always would be. Until I served as Warden, I hadn't really thought much about it. As a Warden, I came to realize just how many volunteer hours go into making St. Olave's the church it is.

I also realized that in many ways, the church needed to be run like a business if it wanted to survive. The aim might not be to "turn a profit," but, at the very least, expenses needed to be kept in line with income. In recent years, there has been a greater effort to keep all parishioners informed of where the church stands financially, which in turn increases givings. If I learned nothing else as Warden, it's that we CAN'T take our church for granted. I want to make sure St. Olave's will still be around for my grandchildren to be baptized.



JUDY SHER



“ST. OLAVE’S
HAS
CHANGED MY
LIFE. I AM
HONOURED
TO BE A
MEMBER.”

I love St. Olave’s because I feel that I have come to a loving home where one is accepted unconditionally.

For most of my life I have been a drop-in Christian. I first dropped into St. Olave’s when Rev’d Wigmore was here, then again when Rev’d Rose was here.

When my mother died in 2007, Rev’d Burrows was the incumbent. As I did not know anyone, I snuck into the back seats and Ruth Allen was there. She talked to me, listened to me, answered all my questions. It took a while, but because of her I did go to the Mary and Martha monthly meetings and started to get involved in church activities. It was then that I started to give rides to those who needed one, something I still do today.

It was not too long before I volunteered to be secretary of the ACW and was truly involved with a caring dedicated team of wonderful people. Since I started, there have been many. Penny Burrows, Jean Lilley, Evelyn Milligan, Marney Showalter, Judy Beal, Jill Dalton, Heather Cosgrave, Bernadette D'arcy and Ruth Allen. Today Rev'd Canon Ruth Smith guides the ACW Executive, Sheila Tait, Elizabeth Birmingham, Margaret Roze and Joan Funnell. We meet monthly.

The six of us work as a team, but we are only the organizers. Every woman in St. Olave's is automatically a member of the Anglican Church Women. I know that when we have commitments, especially at times like the Lenten series, no one will be left alone. When there is a special need we have been overwhelmed with volunteers. I have not forgotten the outpouring of contributions for that fantastic Christmas dinner that Rev'd Alexandra organized.

Since Rev'd Robert Mitchell and Rev'd Alexandra Pohlod joined us, for the first time I have gained more knowledge of scripture and what it truly means to be a Christian. St. Olave's has changed my life. I am honoured to be a member.



MICHAEL JONES

“I WAS
IMPRESSED
BY THE
SERVICE AND
THE WARM
WELCOME
I RECEIVED.”



As a very new parishioner, St. Olave's attracted me as a place where I could worship God amidst the visual beauty of the sanctuary, the aural beauty of the music and the poetic beauty of the Prayer Book. As an "unchurched" Christian, I first visited St. Olave's for the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols before Christmas. I was impressed by the service and the warm welcome I received, and began attending regularly shortly thereafter.

In keeping with the theme of a recent sermon, St. Olave's has also given me an opportunity to "redeem my time." In serving as Deputy Rector's Warden and in working on the project to re-finish the church doors, I have been able to contribute to the daily, practical workings of the church and also to meet more of my fellow worshippers.

I am looking forward to the time when we can gather together again without restrictions, and I can meet more of the congregation face to face.



HEATHER COSGRAVE



“IT WAS
HERE AT
ST. OLAVE’S
THAT I FELT I
BELONGED.”

I first visited St. Olave’s Church in the ’70s when I went to pick up my mother after she attended a church service there. As I peeked inside to see what it looked like, I was struck by the beauty of this little church. It reminded me of the one I attended as a boarding school girl in a beautiful hill station in India. Somewhat later, I met Rev’d Wigmore who appeared so warm and welcoming; and, in due course, his wife Margaret who introduced me to the Mary and Martha Group, of which I became a member. One day I expressed to him my interest in joining the choir (I had sung in two Church of England choirs as a girl and in my teens). He encouraged me to do so, and I did. Subsequently, I also joined the Altar Guild. I have attended St. Olave’s for what is now some 40 odd years.

As to what St. Olave’s means to me, let me say this. After losing my parents over a space of about two years, St. Olave’s became my anchor. Without it, I would feel adrift now – rudderless.

Life has not always been gentle, and whenever I faced bleak moments, I always resorted to prayer and the Church to see me through turbulent times. Moreover, one of the things most human beings (and animals for that matter) seek in life is the need to “belong”; and I was no exception. So, it was here at St. Olave’s that I felt I belonged. It has been my spiritual home ever since.

It’s worth mentioning that Rev’d Wigmore officiated at the funerals of my father in the Turner & Porter chapel, and of my mother in this very church. It was here that I married Ron Cosgrave in 1996, the Rev’d Stephen Oliver conducting the nuptials. And Rev’d David Burrows, nearly 10 years later, officiated at Ron’s funeral in the T&P chapel. Hence, over the many years, St. Olave’s has been an integral part of my life. One of my fondest hymns is, “We love Thy Place O God” – a simple hymn, but the words are so meaningful to me.

Naturally, over the long years, I have seen many changes not only among the congregants but also incumbents to the Rectorship. Each has projected his unique style of ministering; but one thing they all held in common is making St. Olave’s a warm and welcoming place of worship for one and all; and now Rev’d Rob is doing the same.

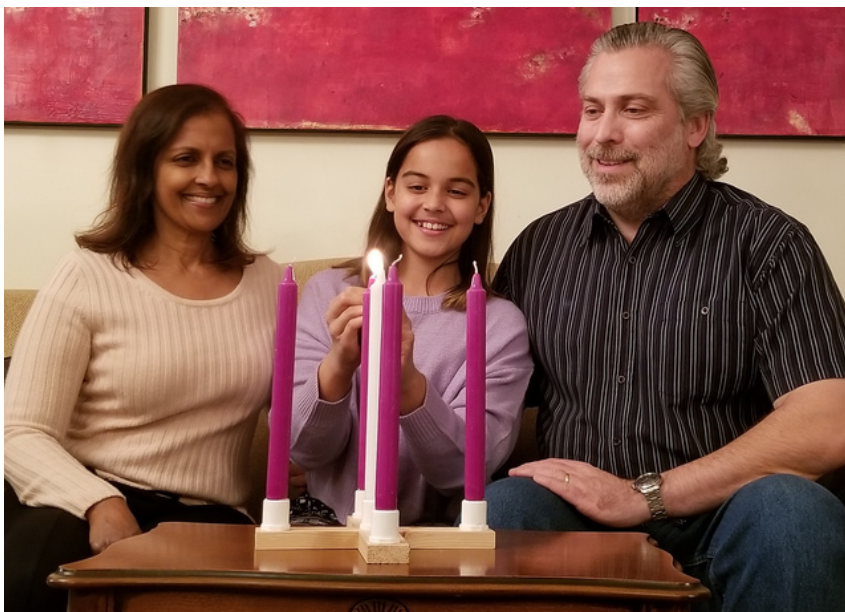
I have made many friends at St. Olave’s, including Jessie Powell now in the nursing home and Rita Irving. I remember fondly the late Myra McFarlane, Isobel Cummings, Janet Sayer, Ruth Allen, Sally Merivale and Moria Collins to name just a few; but of those worshipping now, both young and old, I enjoy a happy relationship and always look forward to socializing at the coffee hours, even on Zoom!

Then, there are the special events yearly that bring us together, such as the Pancake Lunch, so ably organized by Jim Shapland and his crew of helpers; the ACW June lawn sale, the Christmas Craft and Bake Sale, the luncheon put on by the South Sudanese parishioners; and more recently initiated by Rev'd Alexandra, the Christmas Community Lunch. These events, and others too, give one an opportunity to mix and mingle and in some cases raise funds for the Church and other causes.

Many years ago, I recall the late Bette Ragsdale saying St. Olave's is one large family. I couldn't agree more, and am happy and proud to be part of it. At this ripe age of 91, when we continue to congregate virtually online due to the prevailing coronavirus pandemic, I pray that St. Olave's will spread the faith well into the future.



SHARM POWELL



“WHAT MORE COULD I ASK FOR?”

To me, St. Olave's means family, faith, tradition, and hope. These are the cornerstones of my life, and at St. Olave's, each is nourished and continues to grow. What more could I ask for?

Our family immigrated to Canada in 1970. My parents, Sam and Jessie Powell, left everything they had known behind in Bangalore, India, and moved 13,000 km away to give their children (my brother Sanjiv and I) a life of opportunity in the Western world.

Family always was, and continues to be, extremely important to me. You see, I had a big extended family in India, and such fond memories of large birthday parties, beach outings, picnics and even wildlife safaris. All that changed when we moved to Canada and were 'just' a family of four, in a new world.

One of the first things our parents did in our new homeland was find an Anglican church, where we could continue our spiritual growth as Christians. This was first the Church of the Epiphany, and after it closed, we started worshipping at St. Olave's.

We had lived just down Windermere Avenue from St. Olave's since 1972, and I attended Brownies and then Girl Guides with my neighbourhood friends. To me, even at a young age, St. Olave's felt like home – warm, welcoming, and comfortable. In 1983 it would become our family church and a place where many happy memories were created, and where some of life's most important milestones took place.

My parents met some of their best friends at St. Olave's, many of them also neighbours in Swansea. There are too many to name, but I would be remiss not to mention my mother's best friend and partner-in-crime, Bette Birmingham. Together they were part of the 'lunch bunch', a group of St. Olave's women who faithfully met for lunch after service each Sunday. My mother also met her good friend and 'twin' at St. Olave's – Heather Cosgrave. Heather and Jessie realized, upon meeting, that they were born less than 30 days apart in the same hospital, 13,000 km away, in Madras, India! How is that for a small world?

Both my parents were active at St. Olave's, in their own special way. My mother, Jessie, joined the Mary Martha Group, the ACW, taught Sunday School, started the annual children's nativity play (a tradition she brought from India), and helped organize the St. Olave's Mini Caravan celebration of multiculturalism.

My father Sam was a sidesperson, greeting parishioners, collecting the givings and always offering drives home to anyone who needed. He also faithfully supported my mother in all her church endeavours. One special keepsake I have is a St. Olave's write-up about my parents, which referred to my mother as the "Pageant Lady" and my father as her "Silent Soldier". Our family of four always felt like we were a part of a much bigger, extended family when we were at St. Olave's.

Both my brother and I got married at St. Olave's (by Reverend David Burrows) and eventually brought our own families here. I found my way back to more regular worship after having a child of my own, knowing the importance of having a strong sense of faith.

Kevin, my husband, and our daughter Liesl now consider St. Olave's "our church" and its congregants, "our family". We feel truly fortunate to have a wonderful clergy led by Reverend Rob and our Curate, Reverend Alexandra.

Our family enjoy all the gatherings at the church, such as the pancake lunch (thank you Jim Shapland), the South Sudanese joint service and lunch celebration (the dancing that often follows is a particular favourite of Liesl's), the summer BBQ (if we're really lucky, accompanied with live entertainment from Craig Douglas), the summer lawn sale, the Famous People Players outing, the annual Christmas Craft Show and Bake Sale and of course, the weekly coffee hours in the Ethel Brown Room. More recently, our family really enjoyed hosting a table at the inaugural Christmas Outreach Meal and hosting the occasional Zoom Coffee hour where we can catch up with our fellow parishioners, even during the pandemic.

Liesl was baptized at St. Olave's, attends Sunday School here, and is looking forward to being confirmed one day. Liesl also enjoys being a Greeter, selling Christmas ornaments with her "Oma Bette", and participating when possible in the weekly Youth Group meetings with Carol Ambler. Liesl also proudly takes part in the annual Christmas Nativity Play, something that is so special to her.

My involvement with the Stewardship Committee over the past three years, and more recent role as Deputy People's Warden, have given me both great satisfaction and a deeper appreciation of what St. Olave's provides parishioners, the broader community of Swansea and those beyond.

I hope this has given you a small sense of why St. Olave's is so special to me. It is an extension of my family, it embodies and nurtures my faith, it is an important tie to my past, and it offers hope for the future. As I see our daughter grow up in this special place, I know it will give her much of what she needs to continue her journey through life, just as it did, and continues to do, for me.



THE REV'D ROB MITCHELL



“ST. OLAVE’S
IS HOME.”

For those of us who have moved several times, defining ‘home’ can be complicated. I grew up in Saskatoon, went to seminary at Wycliffe College, and have since lived in Peterborough, Cookstown, and several different neighbourhoods of Toronto. But even though Saskatoon was my childhood home, my family’s roots are elsewhere including Calgary and here in Toronto. My grandmother moved from Collingwood to west Toronto as a young woman and lived on various streets just east of High Park including Triller Avenue and Indian Road. She eventually owned a home on Fern Avenue, and would be married, in the 1940s, at the Old Mill. And so, if you asked me “where is home?” I’d have several different answers.

Caroline’s and my journey to our current home – the St. Olave’s Rectory – began much earlier than it may seem. In fact, the first time I stepped foot in St. Olave’s beautiful building was around the year 2000. I was studying theology at Wycliffe and had applied for a Prayer Book Society student bursary. The

interviews for the bursary were held in the Wardens' Vestry and I recall, on that brief walk through the Nave, marvelling at the arches and windows. Many years later I was invited by Paul Scrivener to attend a workshop in the Ethel Brown Room on the future of Prayer Book parishes. Part of the day included a service in the Chapel, and I recall being struck by the beauty of that place. The lovely woodwork, the beautiful windows, the quiet simplicity. The Chapel remains, to this day, one of my favourite places in our church building. The next time I would enter the building would be with Caroline, on a summer Sunday in 2015. It was a low-key Sunday, and we came and left quietly, incognito. And so, by the spring of 2016, when I was invited to interview for the position of Rector, I was entering St. Olave's for the fourth time in my life. About 16 years had passed since my first visit, but there I was, once again, being interviewed in the Wardens' Vestry!

And now, more than four years later, as the Rector and a resident of this parish, I've been asked to reflect on what it is I love about St. Olave's. As I think about this question, I am reminded of a sermon preached a few years ago by the Rev'd Dr. Schuyler Brown, where he described St. Olave's as a "miracle." In the midst of a largely secular culture and against all the forces of modernization, St. Olave's has remained quietly confident in its identity.

We are a church that values the traditions, beauty and timeless words of the Book of Common Prayer. We are a loving congregation that welcomes anyone who feels called to worship with us. We are a congregation that has demonstrated enormous generosity, commitment, and selfless offerings of

time, talent and treasure, especially during the last 10 months. And we are a church that is committed to teaching the same faith in Christ that we have received from our forebears. Calling St. Olave's a miracle is not a boast. It is simply recognition of the fact that we are a very special place.

And even more than all of that, St Olave's is home. From having moved so many times in my life, I have learned that home is not just one place, but can be anywhere you feel you belong. And as a place full of welcoming people, and as a place that shares my values, my priorities, and my faith, I dare say that I belong here. For this miracle that is St. Olave's, I thank God every day.





360 Windermere Avenue, Toronto, M6S 3L4
stolaves@stolaves.ca | 416-769-5686

www.stolaves.ca