

PARISH PROFILE

APRIL 2019

St. Stephen's Anglican Church BE REAL, BELONG, BELIEVE IT



St. Stephen's Anglican Church in Calgary, is an exciting, progressive and energetic inner-city parish that embodies "walking the talk" of Christian beliefs. A parish blessed by two long-term ministries of 16 and 20 years, we are now looking for another Incumbent to continue our open and caring engagement with the local community and the wider world.

WHO WE ARE IN OUTREACH



" We hold to a faith that is spiritedly independent, intellectually curious and culturally engaged. "

In 1997, we began the first **Inn from the Cold** ministry in Calgary, a ministry that grew over time to engage more than 50 organizations - many faith-based - and, eventually, to become a free-standing charitable agency, the largest in Alberta dedicated to support for families in ending homelessness.

We participate each year, with banners and boisterous marchers, in Calgary's Pride Parade. The main banner often ends up over the front doors of the church. The most recent version announces, over the colours of the rainbow: "**Yes. Everyone. We Mean It.**" A smaller handheld sign carried by church members in the parade last year won for Best Sign by showing a crossed-out fig and the saying "I said, I hate FIGS!" - God.

Our socially conscious youth have organized campaigns to provide backpacks to the homeless and birthday supplies to the **Interfaith Food Bank**.

Annually we join forces with other churches to feed over 500 homeless at the **Feed the Hungry Dinner**.

Our outreach extends beyond the local community as we are active in support of **PWRDF**. For example, in 2018 we raised \$4470 to buy 149 goats, and we provide support for a number of ministries in Rwanda and South Sudan.

We are well connected to aid agencies in the city and support special individual needs through the **Rector's Discretionary Fund** when referrals are received from any of our community partners. Our Rector's Discretionary Fund is generously supported by parishioners.

In partnership with two other Calgary parishes, we welcomed and supported a **Syrian Refugee Family** (parents and four children) in their new life in Canada. Relationships and informal support continue.



WHO WE ARE IN FELLOWSHIP

" Things build from the ground up here. People feel they can take an idea and move forward with it - people feel they can have ownership of different outreach initiatives. "



Our large lawn sign often speaks to evocative contemporary themes rather than time-worn biblical passages. We also display smaller signs intended to catch the attention of dog walkers enroute to our next-door neighbour, an off leash dog park; these signs announce wittily and quoting from scripture that however much God loves dogs, **cleanliness is next to godliness, so pick up your poop !**



Every fall for 10 years now, we have hosted **Midtown Mosaic**, a two-day art exhibition for the community that allows local artists, some of whom rent studio space in our Memorial Hall, to display and sell their works. Proceeds from the event are donated to local charities.

EfM
EDUCATION FOR MINISTRY

Ministries that support **spiritual formation** include Sunday school, meditation group, Education for Ministry (EFM), bible study, labyrinth walks and Lenten studies.

Our annual **Stampede Breakfast** brings together members of the parish and community, to celebrate with music and worship outside. The 2018 version welcomed 235 people, 141 of whom received communion.



WHO WE ARE IN COMMUNITY

" A wide variety of people attend. Anyone is welcome to participate in any way they want regardless of gender, ethnicity or religion. Non-Anglicans are welcomed. "

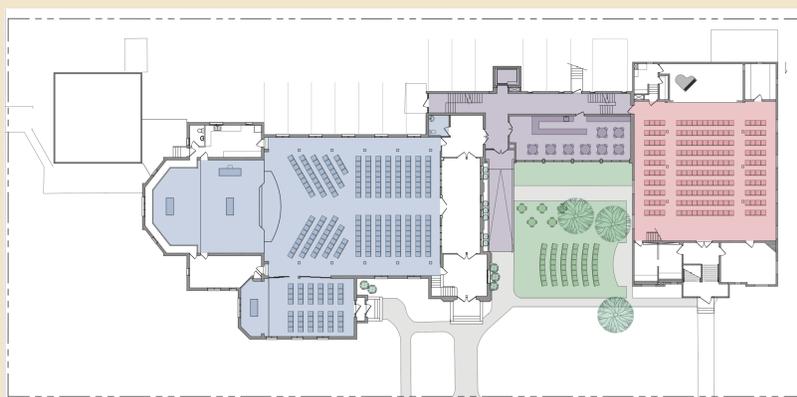


Led by a vision to make our church more accessible to the wider community, and understanding that the modern world increasingly feels the movement of the Spirit through the arts, five years ago we completed **Open Doors I**. The project was a complete renovation of the sanctuary to enhance the worship space, take advantage of excellent acoustics, and strengthen already strong ties with the performing arts community. This was done in part by: creating an inlaid labyrinth in the new flooring, replacing pews with chairs to allow for myriad re-configurations of the seating; and, installing theatre lighting. Worship has been enhanced and the space has become a popular venue for small scale theatre productions and a wide variety of concerts.



The Open Doors I project serves as an example of the resourcefulness of the parish: costing \$1.8 million, it was funded by donations, pledges, heritage grants, memorial gifts and planned gifts arranged by St. Stephen's members. The renovations were completed without incurring any debt. A highlight of the funding was a project undertaken by 45 volunteers to remove the pews carefully, adjust them to various sizes and sell them to church members and others for home and office use. The sale of the pews raised \$45,000 rather than having them end up as construction waste.

Our facilities are well used through the week by a host of church, performing arts and community groups, for example, women's soup group, men's group, yoga, recovery programs, Girl Guides, local condo boards; as well, there is a community garden on site. There is no community hall in the surrounding neighbourhood and St. Stephen's fills some of the gap; we would like to expand on that role in the Open Doors II project (see below)



OUR WORSHIP

" Our worship gets the balance right. It looks and feels like church - there is enough ceremony and routines that you may have grown up with but there is the willingness to be flexible within a safe zone. "



We use the two prayer books authorized for use in the Anglican Church of Canada - The Book of Common Prayer and the Book of Alternative Services, but both are used as resources, that is, with subtle innovations that make the services a better reflection of the modern congregation. For instance:

While following the BCP in its original format (and not the version found in the BAS) the wording is often changed to be more inclusive, such as "all" in place of "men" and "the One" in place of "Him".

Similarly, for the BAS and the Propers, inclusive and non-violent language is used.



The music used for worship at St. Stephen's is an intentional blend of traditional and contemporary, including hymns from Common Praise and from contemporary Catholic and Protestant hymnals:

Praise songs and choruses are less common, but are not unheard of.

Accompaniment may be provided on the Casavant organ, the Yamaha baby grand piano, or on guitar, cello, flute, oboe or any other of a wide range of instruments.



Perhaps most significantly, our worship balances the dignity of Anglican liturgy with the spontaneity of an authentic human gathering. Thus, the structure of catholic worship is adhered to, while the spirit permits moments of mirth and sadness. This is reflected in the Sunday liturgy at both services, but also in such special services as:

The Easter Vigil - featuring an outdoor fire from which light is brought into the church;

The Christmas Eve pageant, complete with donkey, sheep and herding dogs, rightly billed as the most exciting, if least rehearsed, pageant in the city.



OUR HISTORY

" The community doesn't have all the answers, we're okay with that, we're willing to ask questions"

The parish was established in 1906 and the present church building was dedicated in 1952 with 1,492 people present. The Memorial Hall was built in 1923, and the education wing, linking the building above, was added in 1963. The rectory, adjacent to the church is no longer used as a rectory but earns rental income for us.

There is an entire generation of Calgarians, now mostly octogenarians and older, whose lives were shaped by St. Stephen's as a place of both spiritual formation and worship, where many sang in the choir, performed in musical theatre productions in the parish hall, and belonged to a large Young People's Association where members often met future spouses and made life long friends.

We have wartime associations that span the last hundred years, including the First and Second World Wars, the Korean War, and, most recently, the war in Afghanistan, as represented by several memorial plaques hanging in the chapel. The King's Own Calgary Regiment provided the funds for the building of the chapel in 1952 and our association with the regiment has continued to this day.

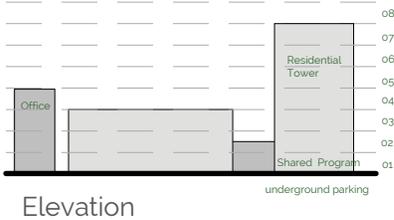
In the 1960's the parish operated a coffee house in the lower Memorial Hall, attracting not only many young people of the day but also up-and-coming artists including Joni Mitchell and the Irish Rovers.

In the 1970's when the surrounding Beltline area of the city was rife with signs of poverty and even dereliction, we opened a storefront outreach program across from the church where people in need could gain access to the social services they needed and, in the process, receive a warm welcome as well. This initiative predisposed us to take up the challenge in the late 1990's, literally to open the church doors to the homeless with the formation of the Inn from the Cold Society mentioned earlier.



OUR FUTURE

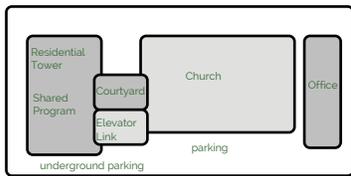
"We are willing to wrestle with and live with life's questions; all experiences and life choices are respected."



We have embarked on **Open Doors II**, the next phase of serving our community on a grand scale through the redevelopment of our property.

The Guiding Principles of Open Doors II are:

- Inclusive and Accessible**
- Community Relevance**
- Respectful of Heritage and Tradition**
- Sustainable Future for St. Stephen's**



St. Stephen's is looking to develop a mixed use **Social Enterprise** on its property.

It is proposed that the mixed use project have a primary use as a provider of **affordable housing** with a complementary **community hub**.

The project will look to replace the existing Education Link and Memorial Hall with a new structure/s. The costs to repair or maintain these existing buildings are prohibitive. The Rectory may also be renovated or replaced.

The proposed project will have more ability to meet social needs of the community and to align with our vision and values.

The proposed project will leverage under used property and work to secure a sustainable future for St. Stephen's.

We are looking to create an enterprise that can provide a **holistic community** offering not only affordable housing but also combined with opportunity for employment, a sense of purpose, a sense of identity and more - for an identified priority needs group in our local community.



