

# EPIPHANY 2017



All Saints' Church-Community Centre, 315 Dundas Street East, Toronto ON M5A 2A2

## More changes and transitions

A two week break in most All Saints' programs at Christmastime allowed the staff the opportunity to look back, reflect, and take stock on the past few months, and assess how we did, and to anticipate what we face going forward. The change of the calendar on New Year's Day meant that we have done what people around the world also do at this time of year.

We celebrate the successes of the passage of the previous 365 days. *Whew!* We are still here with all the strengths and contributions that All Saints' has garnered over the years. However, we are also apprehensive about what is to come, wishing that we had more control over the uncertain days ahead.

2016 meant the difficulty of maintaining programming and focus without the leadership of our Executive Director, who was on extended sick leave. You will read in this newsletter how programs expanded nevertheless, new staff replacements came on board, new sources of funding

## New Men's Cooking Class

Having identified a gap in what All Saints' offers in services for men, our staff has begun a new Tuesday cooking group for them. Seed money generously provided by the Saint James Cathedral Outreach Committee and by an anonymous donor have allowed us to bring back a very popular program that was offered in the past, which many men have asked for in the years since it last ran.

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developed, and energy and sense of purpose grew.

Challenge brought forth creativity from staff and volunteers and participants in the programs. Their resourcefulness will continue to enable All Saints to meet the demands it faces in 2017 — from our aging facilities (dating from 1874), from the growing list of homeless in Toronto (5000 sleeping outdoors and in shelters), and from retirement of the Rev. Joanna Manning (coming in April).

But we have especially needed and will continue to need the donations and help of you our readers.

The men together plan their meals, balancing the accessibility to them of the ingredients and their affordability. They divide the preparation tasks and duties among each other, eat a meal together, and then clean up the space. The new recipes that they learn they can put in their binders to take away as a cookbook at their end of the course.

Please see *Cooking Class* on page 4

## A Parish Church and a Community Centre

Upon entering the church building at 315 Dundas Street East, you would think All Saints' Church–Community Centre a very different organization than the church you ordinarily find on the corner in your community. Certainly there is the altar at the front and the stained glass windows. But in the place of pews there are tables and chairs filled with people drinking coffee, a serving counter with sandwiches, a nursing station at the back, and a row of computers to the side.

All Saints' became a parish church again in 2011. It had given up its status as a parish forty years earlier when a changeover in the social–economic class in the community had occurred. No longer were All Saints' neighbors the leading citizens of Toronto like the Gooderhams (of the distillery firm) or the Allans (who donated Allan Gardens to the City). Instead the

## All Saints' Nurse

Since she began working at All Saints' Church just before this past Christmas, our registered nurse Megan Lowry has brought with her a passion for providing high–quality, accessible health care to marginalized individuals. In addition she has offered us the resources that she had already received from a year of experience in working with the marginally housed in the Streets to Homes program and with the 416 Drop–in for Women.

All Saints' employs a nurse in order to better meet the needs of its drop–in guests in precarious health. Drop–in staff identified a gap in the service we offered when it came to being able to access expertise with health care, especially with regard to the homeless and the poorly housed.

While physical and mental illnesses can create the difficulties in people looking after their selves that



*The Talisker Players regularly perform for our daily Drop–in visitors*

large homes of the city founders had now become converted into rooming houses for low–income lodgers in the temporary work force.

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place them at greater risk of becoming homeless, homelessness itself causes and exacerbates poor health. The stress of being homeless increases anxiety, fear, depression, sleeplessness and substance use. Homeless people are excluded to the fringes in a modern society and its supports. They make up the most vulnerable and disadvantaged social group in our city, living on the streets and temporarily at shelters because of sudden and traumatic disruption of links to family friends and ties to employment. Homelessness means a low quality of essentials like nutrition and shelter, together with high rates of physical and mental illness.

The homeless drop out of treatment frequently because of the instability of their dwelling places. The longer an individual spends on the street the

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## Tracking the Deaths of the Homeless

City statistician Joyce Bernstein recently joined our weekly staff meeting to talk to us about the new reporting system that the City of Toronto has instituted this year to count the number deaths from homelessness.

In 1985 a coroner's inquest into the death of Drina Joubert, who froze to death in a truck in an laneway near All Saints', resulted in a jury recommendation that the provincial coroner track the number of homeless deaths. It has taken until this year for government to finally institute a system to



gather this invaluable data to better assist and house vulnerable populations.

All Saints' will be among 200 partners in the city to help assemble this data. Ms. Bernstein told staff that a similar project in 2012-14 had found over 300 babies born to homeless moms annually in Toronto, where previous official statistics had counted less than 10 babies born to these women every year in Toronto

## Weekly Singing Group Soothes the Soul of All Who Join In

By Judy Righton

Most Thursdays at 11:00 a.m. you will find All Saints' volunteer John Deacon at the front of the Church playing his guitar, and leading a loyal group of community members in song. Anywhere from 6 to 12 members of the All Saints community participate in the hour long singing group each week. Participants can choose from a wide variety of well-known modern folk classics and religious-based songs from a specially prepared binder. The weekly session provides an oasis for everyone to share in the joy and positive energy that music provides. There is also time devoted during the latter half of

each hour for participants to explore philosophical ideas and spiritual-related issues.

The group originated about six years ago as a weekly forum for religious discussion. Its development has been shaped by input from clergy, staff and members of the All Saints community. John introduced his guitar and a musical dimension to the gathering about three years ago. Group membership grew quickly as the inclusive power of music began to work its magic.

John first began playing the guitar as a child, practicing with his cousin while riding the streetcar. His passion for sharing the healing and inspirational power of music is obvious as he plays all requests by ear and by heart. John says leading the weekly group adds an immeasurable amount of joy to his life. The group

*John Deacon maintains a blog at the [homelessguide.com](http://homelessguide.com) that includes a number of entries inspired by All Saints.*

Please see *Soothing the Soul* on page 5

### *Cooking Class* from page 1

Our new course relies on the leadership of one of our newer drop-in employees. Dave Smith is a Plains-Cree-Metis community worker who has been a Good Food Coordinator at FoodShare and Green Thumbs Growing Kids. He continues to work in the food service and restaurant trade as well as his part-time employment at All Saints' on Tuesdays.

### *A Parish Church* from page 2

Precariously employed and often not well-educated, there were no longer enough members of the congregation who had the qualifications to administer a parish as its leaders. Thus All Saints' ceased to have the usual structure of parishes in the diocese with their churchwardens and advisory council. Instead it drew on church volunteers from other parishes to sit on its board of directors with their expertise in business administration and financing. When diocesan legal structures changed to catch up with All Saints' and other parishes with needs like it, the congregation at All Saints' again became officially recognized as a parish.

So though it is a community centre with strong links to neighboring residents who might not see themselves as congregation members, still All Saints' has retained its Sunday worshipping congregation through all the decades since it was founded in 1872. Furthermore, in respect of its ties to its neighbors, All Saints' embodies some of the earliest traditions of what "parish" means.

In the 8th-century, the Archbishop of Canterbury first applied the term "parish", which once meant simply the dwelling place of the priest, to the Anglo-Saxon geographical township already in existence. The administrative centre of the par-



*Men's Cooking Group*

ish was the recognised unit of local government, concerned for the spiritual but also as well the temporal and physical welfare of all those living within the parish boundaries.

Thus the first parishes had responsibility for the care of the poor, road maintenance, and even law enforcement. All Saints' provides an example how the Church might revive some of its original responsibility.

All Saints' extends this sense of a parish so that it can now include reinforcements that can come from outside the parish boundaries. Its board of directors members often come from other parishes. All Saints' operations rely on the help of nearly 50 volunteers from other parts of the city and donors from across the country.

Innovation and tradition have sustained the Anglican Church in the Dundas-Sherbourne neighborhood and will continue make All Saints' both distinctive as a parish church as well as a community centre that is also deeply rooted into the oldest foundations of Anglicanism.

*Soothing the Soul* from page 2

strengthens his faith, and also gives him a greater sense of connection and stronger sense of grounding in a hectic world. For John, the benefits of leading the group in song permeate all aspects of his life – both professional and personal. He hopes that the group will give all who join in each week a safe place to connect in order to support each other, celebrate their faith and freely express their ideas.



*John Deacon leads the Thursday group*

## Seeds for the sower

By the Rev. Canon Bradley Lennon

Although six weeks of winter remain ahead, this is the time of year when our All Saints’ gardeners begin to consult the seed catalogs and plan for the garden around the church. It is just before Lent that one of our Sunday readings this year has St. Paul telling his Corinthian church that he had been the planter and then Apollos was the waterer but that God had given the growth to what had resulted from their work.

My return to the directorship of All Saints’ has emphasized this same lesson to me. Whatever I might have initiated over 25 years ago when I was last here at Dundas and Sherbourne, there are many others that have followed me that weeded and fertilized and watered. No one of us can claim responsibility for what has matured here.

Just as it is God providing the sunshine and rains for the vegetables

grown in the garden, so it is God’s sending of the Holy Spirit that has grown our Christian community here.

Our scriptures begin with the first human beings surrounded by a garden. However, evil soon came into that setting. The garden at All Saints’ still seems surrounded by wicked misdoings. Three people have been shot and killed in the nearby streets since Christmas. We in this part of Toronto are preparing for the onslaught of bootleg fentanyl that has so hurt a similar population to ours in the city of Vancouver.

Just the same — the growth here continues unrelentingly — and not because of one of us has been pushing up the shoots. In early December thirty staff and volunteers at All Saints’ met for breakfast at a diner

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*“He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.”*  
2 Corinthians 9.10

*Nurse* from page 2

less likely it is that they have a primary physician. Thus, homeless people rely on walk-in clinics and emergency rooms for their health care--the most costly way of obtaining treatment from our public healthcare system. Consequently, our All Saints' drop-in aids not just its drop-in patrons but as well our wider community. According to a FaithWorks study completed last year, by employing a nurse, All Saints' contributed a spinoff benefit to our wider neighborhood of \$137,000 in enhancing the health of our drop-in users.

Homeless people's attitudes toward health care services have often been shaped by previous health care encounters in which they have felt unwelcomed or discriminated against. By her daily presence in the drop-in Megan hopes to establish regular contact with the drop-in clientele and develop relationships of trust. She can then be a reassuring presence alongside them as she accompanies them to the medical services that they require. She appreciates working in a setting like All Saints' in which she, as a nurse, has the flexibility and capacity in her workplace to establish this kind of nursing care.

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down the street. Our joy and celebrations burst out the doors and overwhelmed the wastes outside.

Some of us come to All Saints' from other parts of Toronto. Others of our volunteers live next door or close by. Some are wealthy, some have few possessions. We were all from different backgrounds and sharing our stories with each other. In our meal together we feasted on bounty greater than just the bacon and eggs that we had ordered from the menu.

It is not just carrots, zucchini, broccoli, and chard that grow at All Saints', and what results here in our spiritual lives comes from God and no harmful pests will overrun the garden here.

**All Saints' Church-Community  
Centre**

315 Dundas St E  
Toronto, ON M5A 2A2

**Phone:**

416-368-7768

**E-Mail:**

amin@allsaintstoronto.com

**We are All Saints!**

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*We're on the Web!*

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*Visit us at:*

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[www.allsaintstoronto.com](http://www.allsaintstoronto.com)

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*Friday breakfast volunteers and staff*