



Parish Profile: St. John's Anglican Church Willowdale



Celebrating our 50th anniversary in 2023!

Introduction

St. John's Anglican Church Willowdale celebrated our 50th Anniversary last year. We have grown from a congregation of immigrant families from Hong Kong to a parish that serves all people. All nations, all ages, one family under God. Learn more about our parish by visiting our [website](#).

Who We Are

Founded in 1973, St. John's (originally [St. John's Chinese Congregation](#)) was a church on the move, first meeting at St. Paul's Bloor Street, then moving to Church of the Redeemer on Bloor and Avenue Road, and finally landing for a time at 135 First Avenue in Riverdale, where we shared facilities and ministries with St. Matthew's Anglican Church. After a brief relocation to 171 Delhi Avenue ((formerly St. Christopher's), in 2013 we took up permanent residence at 1087 Lillian Street, where St. Patrick's



Anglican Church welcomed St. John's to settle, worship and serve all as the Parish of St. John's Willowdale.

Worship, Liturgy and Music

Sunday Services

We offer a Hybrid Service in English at 10:00 am, alternating between Eucharist and Morning Prayer with the Service in Chinese at 11:15 am. The Service in English (BAS) is supported by the Vocal Ensemble (led by our music director/organist) or by the Worship Team. The Service in Chinese (translated BAS) is supported by the Choir led by music director/organist. We have a group of volunteer organists to supplement the music director/organists.



A love of music! Vocal Ensemble from the Service in English, the Worship Team from the Service in English, and the choir from the Service in Cantonese performing together.

On key occasions, we do a Joint Service in Cantonese and English. We also hold Special Services during Advent and Lent.

Children's Church + Sunday School

Every Sunday, we begin Children's Church + Sunday School at 10:00 am with a time of worship to praise our Lord together. Following worship, we dive into Bible lessons, with stories thoughtfully selected from the first readings or gospel readings of the Sunday services. This approach encourages children and their parents to explore the same Bible stories together. After the lesson, children take part in a fun craft activity tied to the teaching, reinforcing their understanding and helping them remember the lesson.



Some of our children with their Sunday School crafts in the nursery room.



On average, we have around 10 children attending during special church seasons such as Easter, Pentecost, and Christmas, and approximately 8 children on regular Sundays. The age range of participants is between 4 and 12 years old.

Ushers

Our team of ushers welcomes worshippers by handing out the bulletin as they enter the church; monitor door from the narthex and all chancel side doors during service to ensure it is a quiet environment for those inside worshipping. The ushers also collect donation during service, invite parishioners up to the alter to receive Holy Communion and record attendance for the service. They play a vital role in making newcomers feel welcome and comfortable in our parish.

Learning and Spiritual Nurture and Development

Bible study is built into our Sunday programming, with a Bible Study in Cantonese held every second and fourth Sunday afternoons of the month via Zoom, and a Bible Study in English after the 10:00 am service. Prayer Meetings in Cantonese and English are also held on Wednesday mornings and evenings via Zoom.

Mutual Support and Fellowship

Youth Group

Our youth group was formed in the early summer of 2024 to address the needs of our growing children. Our aim is to nurture their spiritual growth, engage them within the church community, and grow a new generation of leaders and stewards of the faith. We are a small group, with ages ranging from 10-15, coming from all corners of the world and operate in English.

We have bimonthly Bible studies following Children's Church to explore the Word and deepen their understanding of their faith. We instill a sense of belonging and responsibility through their involvement in the church community. The Youth are actively engaged with preparing snacks for after service tea time, as well as leading community outreach projects. We put their faith into action and helped them show compassion and social responsibility through our summer bimonthly lemonade and market stand to support education for Indigenous Youth, clothing and food bank drives for the underprivileged, and food sorting at our local food bank. These activities, as well as games night, volleyball and baking together, have also been great opportunities for them to develop meaningful connections with their peers. Keep an eye out for our upcoming youth led service and other outreach projects in the near future.



Chinese Fellowship

The Chinese Fellowship started in January, 2022 as an online monthly meeting for the Cantonese speaking parishioners. In July, 2022, we were able to move the fellowship back to St. John's church hall to meet in-person one Saturday every month from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm. Our fellowship consists of a theme talk, with dinner.

The fellowship has a wide range of topics, including health information, social issues, environmental education, life testimony, spiritual teaching and discussions. We also have casual activities such as BBQ, outings and karaoke which everyone enjoyed so much.

Hong Kong Newcomers

We have an established fellowship for newcomers from Hong Kong and organize gatherings, particularly during Chinese festivals, to provide companionship during times when they may miss their families and hometown. The group is intended to assist newcomers in settling down and adjusting to life in their new environment. It also helps foster relationships and friendships through events, ultimately inviting newcomers to attend church services. The group also hosts special talks on subjects including employment, Ontario Income Taxation and financial management to help newcomers settle in the GTA.

Salt & Light

Established in January 2024, the Salt & Light is a new English-speaking fellowship group that meets once a month at the rectory for a meal, fellowship, and Bible study. The primary audience for this group is young adults (20s-40s) who are single, dating, or married (but without kids) and the purpose is to nurture fellowship and faith formation. Average attendance for this group ranges from 10-14 people, with up to 20+ participants on occasion (e.g. summer barbecue!). This past year, we have covered the Beatitudes from Matthew's gospel.

Men's Group

This group meets once a month, either at a restaurant or at the rectory. The primary focus of this group is the formation and discipleship of young men in the faith. St. John's is blessed to have many young men serve at our church. Our group seeks to address some of the challenges men face today, and how the Christian faith uniquely addresses those challenges.

Alpha Parenting

Over the past few years, St. John's has experienced a baby boom of sorts. Over the course of the pandemic, St. John's ran some Alpha Parenting courses online to help new parents deal with the stresses



and joys of becoming a new Mom and Dad. Not only did these courses teach Christian principles to new families, but it also provided a forum for parents to connect and share together. St. John's is also located next to an elementary school and leases its church space to a daycare. The missional

opportunities are endless. While the Alpha Parenting course has not run for a little while, the babies keep coming and the course will resume sometime in the near future.

The Parenting Children
COLLABORATION

Calling all parents and expecting families!

The Alpha Parenting Course is coming to St. John's Willowdale Anglican Church, **starting on May 2nd!**

- Community & Support
- Parenting Principles
- Videos & Discussion

Join us virtually on Sundays at 4pm!

- One-hour sessions over 10 weeks
- Crying babies welcome!

Contact Rev. Andrew for details:
andrew.stjohnwillowdale@gmail.com | stjohnswillowdale.com

Pastoral Care

Our clergy provide regular pastoral care and conduct services at Cummer Lodge and Bayview ExtendiCare, both located near the parish and both of which have members of St. John's as residents.

Human, Physical and Financial Resources

St. John's is blessed by a team that includes:

- Clergy: Incumbent; Associate Priest; and Honorary Associate Priest
- Parish Secretary / Pastor of Children's Ministry
- Choir Director & Organist (part time)
- Vocal Ensemble Director & Organist (part time)
- Honorary Treasurer/finance team

Our finance and accounting matters are managed by the Financial Team, led by the Treasurer, together with an Accounting Assistant, and several parishioners who help with various matters. Our regular financial tasks include the following: Input weekly donations, Bank Reconciliations, General review of transactions, Advisory Board Report, General support to Treasurer and Wardens. Annual activities include: close GL and prepare Financial Statements, Faithworks Report, facilitate audit, prepare T4s, T4As, Parochial return, CRA Charity return, HST Rebate and prepare budget.



Use of Technology

St. John's incorporates numerous ways of outreach through our use of hybrid ministry. In-person services are technology-enhanced with the use of projectors to show a powerpoint service for all to follow, and audio equipment to make sure that our clergy and service are heard by all. These conveniences are further utilized for our livestreamed broadcast, where we stream both 10:00am service in English and 11:15am service in Chinese each and every Sunday on [YouTube](#).

With 248 subscribers on YouTube, these livestreams, on average, gain an additional 150 views of our weekly Sunday services (English and Chinese service combined), either with individuals directly engaging with our services live on Sunday, or watching the recorded services after. Operation of our livestream and in-person technologies is done by a dedicated group of parishioners, which help to run the audio, powerpoint, and livestreaming software at St. John's every Sunday.

With our livestream equipment (audio and visual), St. John's has been able to accommodate different requests presented to our church, including helping to host in-person concerts, recording and livestreaming weddings and various baptisms and special moments.

Along with our livestream and YouTube broadcasts, St. John's also engages in hybrid ministry with our weekly zoom prayer meetings, twice a month zoom Chinese bible studies, online committee meetings, and many other remote outreach opportunities that present itself to clergy and parishioners.

St. John's also engages with our online community through our main [website](#), a weekly email update by clergy, and through social media with our [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) page.

Our Neighbourhood and Our Mission Field

St. John's has been worshipping and serving at 1080 Lillian Street in Willowdale since 2013. Willowdale is a north Toronto neighbourhood with a higher-than-average population of immigrants, particularly those from Iran, China and South Korea, with many Cantonese, Mandarin, Persian and Korean speakers. Our parish is accessible via 2 TTC bus routes. Bayview Glen Alliance Church, Tyndale University, St. John's Rehabilitation Facility (part of Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre), The Sisterhood of St. John the Divine, Cummer Lodge Long Term Care Home and Wellspring Worship Centre Church are some of the notable institutions within walking distance.

Our church is home to The Munchkin Manor, a privately run daycare, and we share a fence with Lillian Public School. There are several other





schools in our area. In addition, the Yonge/Steeles area is soon to become a high-density zone and we expect a major increase in residential buildings and families.

Resources	
<p>2021 Census This report shows our region's demographics. https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=m2m3g1&DGUIDlist=2013A000435115&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0</p>	<p>City Ward This document shows immigration and mobility. https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/9452-CityPlanning-2021-Census-Profile-Ward-18.pdf</p>

Outreach and Evangelism

ESL Chat-time

Our mission is to share the love of Jesus with our neighbours by providing conversational practice to adult English language learners in a friendly environment. We meet every Tuesday for an hour and a half and focus to help participants to practice speaking English and acquire English vocabulary. Our curriculum also supplies to participants' knowledge about living in Canada and Canadian traditions. ESL Chat-time provides a comfortable environment not just for our guests to learn English, but also to meet friends of their same ethnic background and other cultures. Through our activities and group discussion, everyone has enjoyed learning from one another.

Sports Time

Sports time include: Monday afternoon Table Tennis, Tuesday afternoon and evening Pickle Ball, Friday night Badminton and Table Tennis. Hong Kong Newcomers Sports Time (first Sunday afternoon of the month). Besides providing recreational time for parishioners, the Sports Time serve to bring non-worshippers into the church to experience Christian fellowship.

Alpha Course

We hold the Alpha Course annually as weeknight series. All participants share a simple meal together and then divide into 2 groups to view the videos in English and in Cantonese in separate rooms. The two groups discuss the video. This has been a community and faith-building exercise at our parish, benefit long-time members and newcomers.



Pollinator Garden

Aligned with St. John's Willowdale Anglican Church's 2021-2022 mission of "Healing in God's Creation", members of our community formed the St. John's Gardening Group in 2021. Our group's mission is to glorify God by:

- Stewarding Creation: providing a habitat for birds, butterflies, bees and other creatures
- Building Community: Fostering new connections within our church, our neighbourhood and beyond
- Learning and Sharing: Creating new opportunities to learn, share and preserve Creation



Amateur green thumbs caring for God's creation.

Our major project is to transform a significant portion of our parish's unused back field into a native pollinator habitat. Partnering with the Toronto Botanical Garden and Master Gardeners Toronto, we are working toward a cruciform-shaped, 70% native plant-based garden that will support wildlife in Willowdale while providing an opportunity to connect with our community and educate people about stewarding creation. In 2022, we secured a grant from PollinateTO, a program of the City of Toronto, to support this project. The garden will be completed in 2025.

Our group has also facilitated educational events for our community about pollinators and other issues related to the environment, climate change and how we can play a part. We have already hosted three educational events: "How to Build a Native Plant Garden" seminar with a landscape architect from The Planning Partnership; guided tour of the pollinator/native plant gardens at Toronto Botanical Gardens and Edwards Gardens; and "Putting Your Garden to Bed" seminar with a Toronto Master Gardener. We look forward to more community education opportunities in future. Our hope is to preserve this precious piece of land as a place for education, respite, community and of course for pollinators!

Food Bank Ministry

In 2024, our first year of this ministry, we held discussions with a number of projects that address food insecurity. We decided to support two initiatives: 415 Food Hub operated by NeighbourhoodLink North York which provides food to 500 people every month in a Toronto Community Housing Complex that is a 6-minute drive from St. John's and the Common Table Farm, an urban farm that grows over 50 varieties of fruits and vegetables to families and seniors in Flemingdon Park, many of which are newcomers to



Canada. Through our June and 50th Anniversary Concert fundraising campaigns, we raised a total of \$11,225 in financial donations and many pounds of non-perishable food. The Food Bank Committee would like to thank our concert organizers, musical performers and hospitality committee for a wonderful event.

Present Reality and Future Vision

St. John's is cherished for its **strong sense of community and welcoming atmosphere**. Parishioners appreciate the friendliness, family-oriented environment, and inclusiveness that extend especially to immigrants and newcomers.

Programmes such as ESL and sports fellowships are essential in fostering this welcoming spirit. The multicultural and intergenerational congregation adds richness to the church, ensuring that everyone feels included and valued.



The church's **worship and clergy** are central to its identity. Parishioners

value the Anglican services, which blend traditional and contemporary styles, as well as the dedication and intentional relationship-building of the clergy. The church's **cultural and linguistic diversity**, with multilingual services and a strong rapport between English and Chinese-speaking congregants, is another highlight.

St. John's is also admired for its **physical and artistic aspects**, including its beautiful architecture and stained-glass windows, as well as its accessible location and welcoming surroundings. **Programmes and activities** such as children's programs, senior care, pastoral outreach, and coffee hours contribute to the vibrant community life. Other highlights include the music programmes, coordinated by talented individuals, and the shared meals that strengthen bonds among parishioners.

St. John's is an **inclusive and diverse community** that reflects a broad range of ethnicities, languages, and ages. Originally a Chinese-speaking church, it has evolved to embrace and welcome everyone, celebrating increasing diversity. It offers a **welcoming atmosphere**, characterized by kindness, sincerity, and support, where newcomers feel a genuine sense of belonging. Outreach and fellowship programmes provide integration opportunities, making the church a haven for all.



The church offers **engaging programmes and activities** that meet practical needs and foster community, including ESL programs, sports nights, and children's programmes. Spiritual growth is supported through fellowship groups, Bible studies, Alpha courses, and Christian education. Worship at St. John's is **Christ-centered and grounded in scripture**, offering opportunities for spiritual development for all ages.

With its **physical and aesthetic appeal**, St. John's beautiful church building and surrounding trees create a serene and inviting environment, complemented by practical amenities like parking spaces. Neighbours perceive the church as a **vibrant and purpose-driven community**, where initial misconceptions about its monocultural roots are quickly dispelled by the diverse backgrounds and warmth of its parishioners.

By 2028, parishioners envision St. John's experiencing **growth and diversity**, with a significant increase in membership and a focus on younger generations and families. A more multicultural congregation with balanced resources between English and Chinese ministries is a shared aspiration.

A **stronger sense of community and engagement** is also a goal, with increased volunteer participation and leadership roles for youth and young adults. St. John's hopes to see the return of past parishioners while continuing to welcome new members. Intergenerational and inclusive programmes, such as enhanced children's, youth, and senior ministries, are envisioned, along with expanded services like daycare and joint congregational activities fostering unity.

Parishioners also dream of **improved facilities and accessibility**, including handicap-accessible entrances, new sports and gym facilities, and a functional parking lot. Investments in spiritual and educational development will help build confidence in sharing faith within a multifaith environment. Solid Christian education programmes and efforts to care for God's creation through action and education will also be priorities. While evolving to meet broader needs, the church aims to **preserve its traditions**, maintaining its role in serving the Chinese community and its atmosphere of worship.

To achieve its vision, St. John's should focus on **enhanced leadership and governance**, strengthening its governing body and providing training programmes for younger leaders. Clergy should be selected based on character and openness to multiculturalism rather than race. Increased **outreach and engagement** are also key, with expanded programmes to connect with the wider community, revivals of holiday events like Canada Day, and encouragement of parishioner involvement in small group ministries.

A focus on **stewardship** will be critical, promoting good management of resources—time, talent, and treasure—while encouraging financial support to improve facilities and services. Finally, **spiritual and community development** can be fostered through prayer, intentional spiritual practices, and training congregation members to confidently share their faith. Strengthening the relationship between clergy and lay leadership will further solidify the church's foundation for growth.



Our New Priest

The new Priest-in-Charge should be a strong, God-fearing individual with a reverent heart toward God. Passionate about their calling, they must be faithful in shepherding parishioners and exemplify integrity, sincerity, and honesty. It is essential that they practice what they preach, serving as a role model for the congregation.

Action-oriented and proactive, the ideal priest will inspire others and lead by example. They should be firm, decisive, and capable of making difficult decisions, even in potentially challenging or conflictual situations. With maturity and humility, they should embrace team leadership rather than relying on micromanagement, fostering collaboration and trust among the congregation and church leadership.

Given St. John's multicultural congregation, the priest must have multicultural exposure and be open to inclusivity. **While familiarity with Chinese language and culture is advantageous, a willingness to delegate Chinese ministry to a suitable priest is equally important.** Creativity in balancing church resources to address the needs of both Chinese-speaking and English-speaking congregants is crucial. Furthermore, the priest should exhibit flexibility and adaptability to serve the evolving demographics of the community, especially with the potential influx of immigrants in Willowdale, North York, and Toronto.

The Priest-in-Charge must be approachable, compassionate, and skilled in relationship-building with both existing and new parishioners. Strong communication skills are necessary, including the ability to articulate ideas clearly and concisely. Diplomatic and inclusive, they should foster harmony among diverse congregants while nurturing talent and leadership within the church.

A visionary leader is essential for St. John's to achieve its goals for growth and development. The priest should demonstrate creativity and forward-thinking to guide the church toward its future vision. Their ability to recognize and harness the strengths of parishioners will be instrumental in driving the church's mission and programmes forward.

Our Parish Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,

As we begin our search for a new Priest-in-Charge, we pray for divine wisdom to be granted to the Direct Appointment Team and all congregants during the process. May we discern Your will and find a suitable person, faithful in shepherding Your sheep, preaching the Truth, and leading St. John's forward on the path You have prepared.

Lord, You know the needs and direction of our church, as well as the lives and callings of each candidate. May You bring forth the right person—one who continually learns and lives out Your Word, with a sincere spiritual life, a reverent heart toward God, and a genuine care for the congregation. May the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, rest upon him or her.



We also pray for every step of this appointment process. Grant a spirit of unity so that the decisions made will glorify Your name.

Be Thou our vision, Amen.

慈愛的天父，在這個尋求新主理牧師的過程中，求主賜下屬天的智慧給委選團隊及所有會眾，能辨明祢的旨意，找尋一位合祢心意的人，能忠心牧養祢的群羊，傳揚真道，帶領聖約翰堂行前面的路。

主啊，祢知道我們教會的需要和方向，也知道每位候選人的生命與呼召。願祢興起合適的人選，能恆常學道、行道，有真摯的屬靈生命，敬畏神和關心會眾。耶和華智慧和聰明的靈，謀略和能力的靈住在他或她身上。

我們也為委選過程中的每一步禱告，求主賜下合一的靈，使決定能榮耀祢的名。

求主作我們的異象與指引，阿們。

Respectfully,

Philip Kwan, Rector's Warden
Burton Knight, People's Warden
John Wong
Lawrence Pak

St. John's Willowdale Anglican Church