

# Parish Profile



Holy Trinity Church Thornhill  
April 2022

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## Our Mission Statement

**We are a vibrant, welcoming Christian community  
flourishing in God's love through fellowship,  
outreach, worship, and spiritual growth,  
in an atmosphere of compassion and mutual respect.**

This is the current Mission Statement for Holy Trinity Church, and a vision to which we aspire. Throughout our recent processes of discernment – Reimagining, surveys, and focus groups – parishioners have consistently returned to this mission statement as the best expression of our dreams and vision. The Mission Statement provides the frame of reference for the rest of our Parish Profile.

## 1. Our Future Vision and Our New Priest

We are an historic church providing an inspiring and comforting place of Anglican worship, a home for fellowship, and a helpful resource to the less fortunate in our community. **As we approach our 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we seek a new priest who will work with us collaboratively to reach our vision of the future.**

**Our congregation has many expressions of our understanding of God and the role of Jesus in our lives.** Some seek to deepen their faith through Biblical study and interpretation, reflection, or prayer; others find a sense of peace and serenity in the liturgy, the hymns, and a sense of “being in God’s house.” Still others find their faith in fellowship and acts of service both inside and outside the church.

While we aspire to be an open and welcoming church, we can sometimes be seen as inwardly focused and somewhat stuck in tradition. We need to be more open to newcomers and to new ideas, and to demonstrate a willingness to welcome others into our fold. Like many other churches, our congregation has declined in numbers over the years, but **our hope is to reverse that trend, and attract younger families and youth.**

Although we are a remarkably busy parish, **we want to do even more for our broader community.** Inspired by Jesus’s words in the Gospels, we try to “*Give to everyone who asks you for something ... do for others what you want them to do for you.*” This means better communicating what we have to offer and building relationships with community leaders to better ascertain our neighbours’ needs.

We want to continue to offer a variety of worship services that can appeal to both traditional and modern taste. **We want a priest who is a powerful communicator, able to make the scripture relevant to our daily lives** and, as we read in Matthew 7.28 - “*the crowds were amazed at his teachings*” - amaze us with the promise of Jesus!

Encouragingly, we have been able to adapt to the use of technology and sustain many parishioners, achieve a balanced budget, and maintain a high level of outreach contributions during the pandemic.

***We have successfully pivoted to new ways of providing services and meeting together and look to make even better use of technology in the future.***

**We enjoy spiritual growth and fulfillment** in our early morning daily devotions group, the weekly Bible study group and other Christian education initiatives, many of which are led by lay people. This not only helps with the workload on clergy; it also creates a comfortable peer-based venue for the exchange of views and discussion.

Many parishioners have expressed concern with the current level of pastoral care offered by Holy Trinity, and there will be an even greater need for pastoral care going forward. We need to find a

way to heal ourselves and provide the care that many of us will require in the future. Although we have a Wellness Committee and plan to rehire a Parish Nurse, parishioners have indicated that sometimes people want to talk to the priest about pastoral care and not someone else. **Our new priest will share our vision of the importance of pastoral care and see it as a priority.**

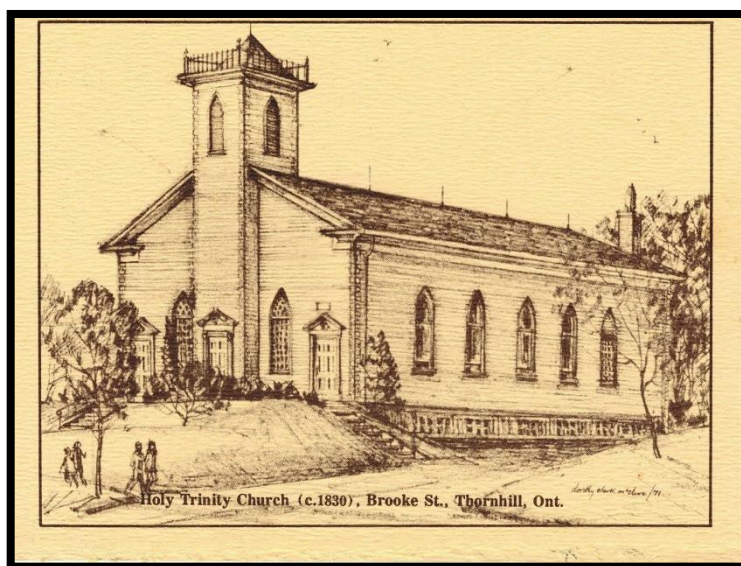
**We need to overcome a sense of negativity in our church and learn how to deal with each other in a loving and respectful way.** We have started on this journey through our recent Reimaging Project, and later, with a series on *Race and Diversity*, and the development of a Code of Conduct. Through it all, we need to be mindful of the underlying causes of unacceptable behaviour and address them.

We do not expect our new priest to come in and solve whatever problems we might have single-handedly. Fortunately, we have a history of strong lay leadership and an extensive volunteer support base in our parish. We believe that by working together, we will be able to meet our challenges, and grasp our opportunities, so that we may become all that we aspire to be.

***In Summary, we seek a new priest who is an inspiring preacher and spiritual leader; dedicated to ensuring timely and sensitive pastoral care; missional towards the large community; comfortable with using technology and open and collaborative in dealing with volunteers and lay leaders at Holy Trinity.***

## 2. History

Trinity Church, (as it was originally called), was established in 1830, and today it is the oldest original church building still in use in the Diocese of Toronto. The church was originally built in Thornhill at the top of the North hill on the West side of Yonge Street. The church cemetery remains there. Seeking a larger, quieter site, it was decided in 1950 to move the church, and so, it was taken apart, board by board, moved down the hill, and re-erected at its present location on Brooke St. Over time a parish hall was added with a large auditorium. Subsequent renovations occurred from time to time to that hall and associated spaces, but the actual sanctuary remained largely untouched.



**THE OLDEST ORIGINAL CHURCH BUILDING STILL IN USE IN THE  
DIOCESE OF TORONTO**

Over the years, successive congregations have made notable accomplishments. These include the establishment of an Endowment Fund in 1980; the sponsorship of and involvement in a non-profit housing project in 1988; the creation of the position of Parish Nurse in 1996; the founding of Holy Trinity School in 1981, which began with 66 students in the church basement, and today has blossomed into a highly regarded K to 12 school situated on 37 acres in Richmond Hill, and the development of a “green team” in 2015, which, by 2018 had become a climate change leader and model in York Region. Throughout the years there has been a growing understanding of the importance of outreach, and this has become a key part of who we are.

Several difficult challenges occurred during the past 190 years, including at least two economic depressions, four pandemics (including the current one), two World Wars, and the moving and re-building of the church. The issues of renovation and maintenance of an historic building, the installation of a new organ, and an accessibility lift were also addressed.

We have also had challenges surrounding the issues of change and leadership. These have created an unpleasant atmosphere on occasion which has been quite stressful for some, and recently caused us to seek help from an outside agency in dealing with difficult conversations. We are currently working our way through this challenge, and as we do so, have been anchored by our Mission Statement which asks us to echo the teachings of Jesus, to go forward “in an atmosphere of compassion and mutual respect.”

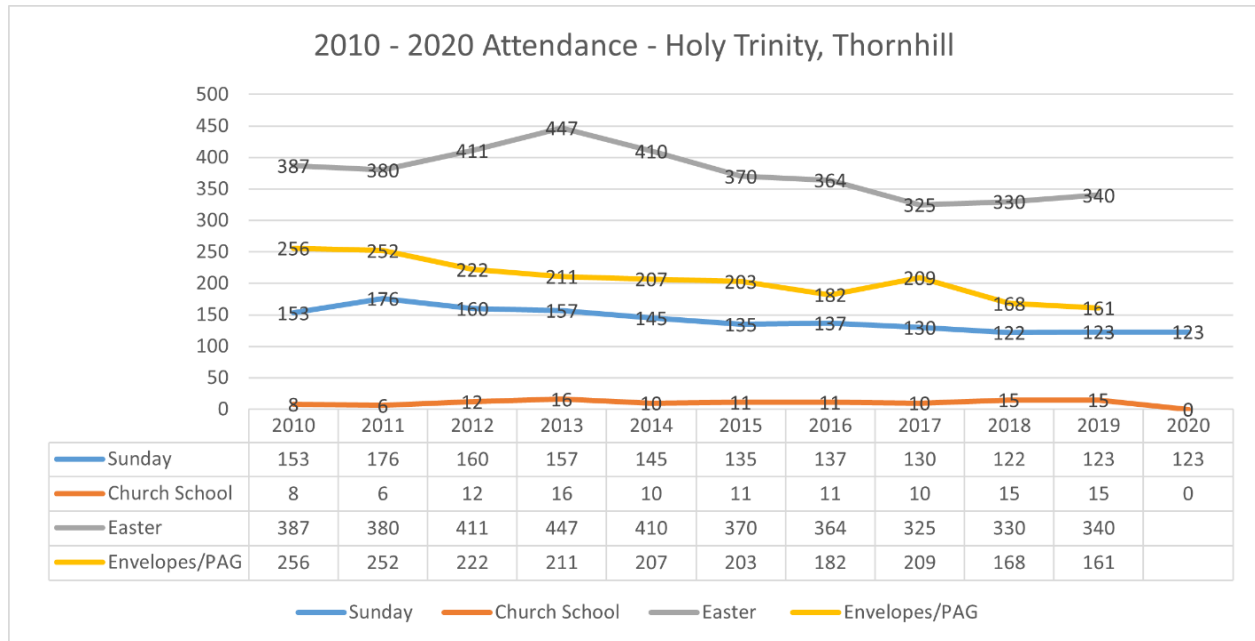
### 3. Worship, Liturgy, and Music

Before COVID and since the early 2000s, Sunday services were as follows: 8:00 am Said Eucharist and homily, and 10:00 am Choral Eucharist and sermon. Variations occurred in the form of Morning Prayer on the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month, and occasionally, ACTION Sundays involving an innovative format and different music, usually with outside musicians. Young people attended a short talk at the start of the 10:00 am service, then retired to Church school. Realizing the need for support and solace, Holy Trinity has had a healing service for several years on the third Sunday of the month (10:00 am).





Attendance figures over the past ten years are shown in the following table:



Other special forms of worship include monthly services at several retirement homes; Lenten Ecumenical services with the Thornhill Ministerial Association (seven churches); Holy Trinity School Founders Day service and Wed 10:00 am Said Eucharist and homily.



**WORSHIP SERVICE**

*Music has long played an important role in our worship at Holy Trinity.*

Hymns vary from traditional to contemporary to spirituals. During the period September to June, a small, dedicated choir regularly presents a wide variety of anthems from Bach to jazz. Occasionally a junior choir will also make a presentation. Special choral presentations occur at Christmas and Easter with delightful Cantatas.



**HOLY TRINITY SCHOOL MUSICIANS**



**GUEST MUSICIANS**

Lay participation in the worship services, including young people, has been encouraged over the years. Lately, this has included opportunities as Lay Assistants, Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, and Servers. The Altar and Flower Guilds, Sidespeople, and the Greeters also support our worship services.



**INSTALLATION OF SERVERS**





CONFIRMATION

#### 4. Learning and Spiritual Nurture and Development

Holy Trinity has a tradition of many small active groups, some of which are dedicated to learning and spiritual development. These include: *"Praying the Headlines."* This group has been meeting monthly to discuss news headlines and current events and praying for the world in these uncertain times.

*SOaR: Start off Right Devotionals (formerly viDEoVOTIONS):* This small group of early risers meets weekdays (8:00 am-8:30 am) to begin their day with prayer, music, light discussion, and positivity. The group has been meeting for over four years, using ZOOM well before the pandemic.

*Tuesday afternoon Bible Study Group*, under lay leadership, has been meeting since the 1990s. Current and historical context is blended into a combination of lectionary readings, the occasional book study, and healthy spiritual discussion. The group enjoys learning and a deepening of spiritual faith.

#### 5. Mutual Support and Fellowship

Fellowship is an important by-product of these and other small groups. A scan of recent Vestry reports identifies these groups and provides a sense of what each does, but special mention should be made of the ACW, which has been extremely active over the years, operating with an overall executive, and five smaller groups.

There are specialized groups such as The Advisory Board, the Quilters, the choir, the Green Team, and committees for the Cemetery, Finance, the Endowment Fund, the Eva Rea Millennium Fund, Liturgy, Outreach and Property.

Before the pandemic, there were ample opportunities for fellowship on a broader scale. Examples of these included coffee hour, establishment of the Footlights Club in 1953, which, by 2018 had presented some 92 productions, Festival of Christmas, Seniors' lunches, Rummage sales, and other outreach endeavours.

*These large social events helped us build relationships and a deeper sense of community.*



**MANY HAPPY RETURNS**

**A FOOTLIGHTS CLUB ORIGINAL PRODUCTION**

**THE WAITING ROOM**  
**A FOOTLIGHTS CLUB ORIGINAL PRODUCTION**



Our busy structure has worked well over the years, creating diverse opportunities for individual parishioners. We believe that individual involvement is one of the important values of a thriving church, and we encourage and welcome newcomers to join a group. We believe that the value of these groups lies in the chance to do good works, deepen our faith and understanding, and experience a sense of belonging, fellowship, and support.

## 6. COVID 19 and the Increase in Technology

In March 2020, Holy Trinity closed its doors, like the rest of the province and much of the country. During this time of fear of the unknown, we struggled to find ways to reach out, and provide comfort and support. Fortunately, our incumbent had been holding *viDEoVOTIONS* weekday mornings using ZOOM (these are now known as *SoAR*). Through his efforts, and with technical assistance from parishioner volunteers, Holy Trinity was able to “pivot” to allow the congregation to gather weekly on ZOOM, and to have our own YouTube channel and through that, to livestream the service. From March 2020 to October 2021, 80 to 100 parishioners tuned in to this virtual service.

This in and of itself was not extraordinary, as many other churches and organizations did the same thing. What is of note is that Holy Trinity has an aging congregation, most of whom had not heard of ZOOM, let alone use it regularly. A congregation who, in the past, had very little to do with technology and had only recently voted not to upgrade our audio-visual capabilities in the church, adapted --- quickly.

COVID did considerable damage to our 190th celebrations but the organizing committee rose to the challenge by planting 190 Canada flags, (provided by our local MPs), on the front lawn of the church. We were also able to enjoy the virtual presence of four Bishops, including The Primate, as guest speakers at various special services throughout the year.

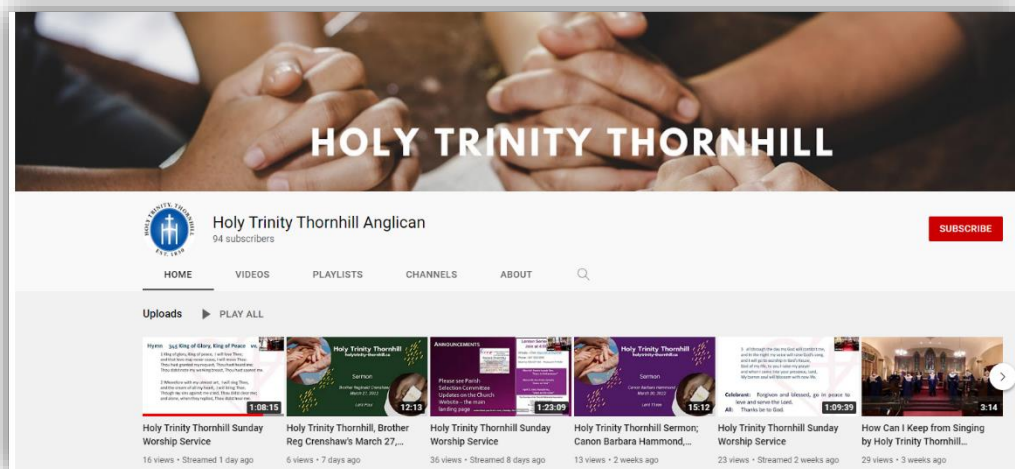


There were, however, other benefits to “having a ZOOM account.” Communication between the Corporation and the parish increased both in frequency and content through announcements following services. Almost all the various committees and groups, including the choir, began meeting “on-line”. In the Fall of 2020, Holy Trinity began a Reimagining Project which included a series of conversations with parish members on what was liked about HTC, what we should keep, stop, and start doing, and what our priorities should be going forward. These groups were chaired by parish leaders and were all online. Parishioners had a chance to respond to the final report at a virtual Town Hall held at the end of January.

The development and enhancement of our website has been another benefit associated with ZOOM. This website has increasingly become the virtual entrance to the parish. It includes information on worship services, videos of service and sermons, parish news and events, reports, and announcements and how to make donations. Once again, volunteers maintain it, “learning as they go”.

With reopening, came another set of challenges as we strove to meet various health protocols. Arrangements had to be made for proper spacing, cleaning, sanitizing, misting and contact tracing for those attending the 10:00 am service. Overall, hybrid attendance numbers remained surprisingly high. Small groups met in the church hall and outreach/community caring continued; masked sandwich-makers for “Out-of-the Cold” made more than 1600 sandwiches in our kitchen during Winter 2021-2022 for those in need.

*The Reimagining Project identified improved technology as one of our future priorities.* We would like to improve our live-streaming and our sound system, and this may require professional assistance, and the assigning of new responsibilities to our paid staff.



HOLY TRINITY'S YOUTUBE CHANNEL



## 7. Pastoral Care

Caring for each other and for the wider community has been a cornerstone for our faith and our worship. For the last few decades, a critical component of pastoral care has been our Parish Nurse. This position of support has been invaluable in assisting the incumbent with pastoral care for sick or shut-in parishioners. The Parish Nurse has also organized courses or programs of health-related nature such as CPR, and has regularly provided other general health information in church bulletins etc. We are currently in the staffing process to replace our most recent nurse.

A Health & Wellness Committee supports the Incumbent and the Parish Nurse in several pastoral related activities. They maintain contact with sick or shut-in parishioners and, those properly trained, also carry out pastoral visitations and assist the Incumbent with communion visits to local retirement and long- term care homes.

***During our Reimagining Project, several parishioners stated that even though the Parish Nurse and volunteers can be very helpful, at times they wanted to speak to the parish priest.***

They also pointed out that it can sometimes be difficult to identify those who need pastoral care. A process to more easily allow parishioners to request or be referred to pastoral care and an ability to indicate their preference as to who to speak to needs to be developed.

In early December, when many have difficulty joining in the joy of the season because of the death of a family member, friends, or of any other adversity, an Advent Meditation (or Blue Christmas) service is held mid-week. It is a time to recognize and reflect that the darkness that the world can bring can be countered by the peace and light Christ offers.

God's ministry comes in many forms. One of the most active at Holy Trinity is the Prayer Shawl Ministry and our many knitters. In 2021, at least 45 shawls were shared with parishioners and friends of HTC as well as with many in pain and suffering in other regions of the country. And last but by no means least, Holy Trinity has toque knitters who made "Cancer Caps" for the chemo unit at a local hospital.



QUILTERS' LUNCHEON



## 8. Human, Financial, and Physical Resources

### Staffing

Our clergy is led by a full time incumbent and assisted by a Lay Pastor and an Honorary Assistant. The Lay Pastor's position is funded by a grant from OFOH until 2023.

The clergy is further supported by a fulltime Office Administrator and a fulltime Custodian who has some responsibilities at the private nursery and kindergarten school located on the premises. Additional supporting staff include part-time positions of Music Director, Church School Coordinator, and a Parish Nurse (currently vacant). A bookkeeper (contract) assists the Treasurer.

### Church Property

The church building is connected to the auditorium by an atrium containing the reception room and vestry. The auditorium includes a stage with lighting and is used by the congregation (Footlights Group) and the community for live plays and presentations. A large kitchen is connected, so that the auditorium can be used for lunches and dinners. Located beneath the auditorium are the church offices and additional meeting rooms. These meeting rooms are also available for use by our community partners. We are fortunate to have ample parking and grounds and gardens which are beautifully maintained by volunteers.



PROPERTY COMMITTEE AT WORK

GARDEN COMMITTEE FLOWER PLANTING



In 2020, we had our most recent Property Condition Assessment, and we received a satisfactory rating. We plan to replace the shingles on the roof of the church in 2022. In addition, we will be updating the audio video system in the nave. Both expected disbursements will be funded by internal resources and a \$5,000 REACH grant.

### Rectory

The church does not own a rectory. We provide a housing allowance which is paid monthly to the Incumbent. The original rectory was sold, and the proceeds were used to establish an Endowment Fund in 1980, which in turn funds various outreach projects and Holy Trinity capital and operational needs. A second rectory was sold in 2012 with the proceeds invested in the Rectory Fund. These assets are held and invested by the Consolidated Trust Fund of the Diocese of Toronto. The Church receives income from the Rectory Fund which is applied to the incumbent's housing allowance.

### Cemetery

Holy Trinity Cemetery is an active 1¼ acre historic cemetery which has several interments each year. A committee of eight parishioners administer the day- today operations of the cemetery. Lawn maintenance is contracted out, but volunteers help with spring and fall clean up days. Maintenance of the cemetery is funded from income generated from the Perpetual Care Fund which is invested in the Diocesan Consolidated Cemetery Fund. A few internment rights still exist for purchase.

### Finances

The financial picture has remained relatively stable in spite of COVID. In 2020, thanks to the Diocesan Jubilee and CEWS, we managed a surplus. In 2021, we ran a small deficit.

***In 2022 we are projecting a balanced budget.***

## 9. Our Community and Our Mission

Thornhill is a community with a population of over 120,000. The community straddles Yonge St, split between the City of Markham and the City of Vaughan. In between these two municipalities and to the North is the City of Richmond Hill. Holy Trinity Church is situated in the historic residential area two blocks west of Yonge St. The area has changed greatly in the last 40 years, becoming quite multicultural, home to large populations with other faith traditions and their schools and places of worship. Fifty-two percent of the population are considered having immigrant status. Seniors and empty nesters account for many of the other residents.

There are many active community groups including two active Seniors Centre/Club, the Thornhill Historical Society, the Horticultural Society, several artist groups, three golf clubs and several Community Centres. Housing has been mainly single dwellings and apartments, but condominiums are becoming increasingly popular. Several Retirement Homes have recently opened in our area. Unfortunately, many young families cannot afford housing in this area, although a few pockets of affordable rental housing do exist. With the Yonge North Subway Extension coming in the next ten years, many more apartments and condominiums are planned. This will change the demographics significantly and present new opportunities and challenges for the ministry at HTC.

### Use of Church Facilities

Community groups currently using HTC facilities include: the Girl Guides (three groups), The Children's Choir, Nar-Anon, Thornhill artists, and The Thornhill Nursery School. In addition, we hope to re-instate the annual large-scale, church-run events once COVID is in check.



**RUMMAGE SALE PREPARATIONS**

## Outreach

*In 2021, numerous charities and worthwhile causes benefitted from \$66,790 dispersed by the Outreach Committee, ACW, Endowment Fund, Eva Rea Millennium Fund.*

[The disbursements are listed in the Vestry report.](#) Some of the significant outreach initiatives overseen by the Outreach Committee include:

### Christmas Assistance

This program supports disadvantaged families in the Thornhill area during the Christmas season. In past years, volunteers from the Thornhill churches have come together to pack hampers with non-perishable foods, toys, and grocery store gift cards. Due to Covid that was not possible. Instead, families received gift cards purchased with the donated funds.



**CHRISTMAS ASSISTANCE**



**FEEDING THOSE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS**

### Mosaic Interfaith Out of the Cold (OOTC)

Due to COVID, OOTC switched from running in a different location each night throughout York Region to one individual location. Parishioners have been very active volunteers in the program at the Thornhill United Church where food and shelter were provided on Friday nights during the winter months for the past 25 years. In 2019, HTC also ran a Friday night emergency shelter for seven weeks from November to January when the OOTC program began.



### Coldest Night of the Year (CNOY)

This is the key fundraiser for OOTC. Our parish is at or near the top of the fundraising teams each year, and 2022 was no exception.



**WALKING FOR COLDEST NIGHT OF THE YEAR, RAISING FUNDS FOR THOSE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN YORK REGION**

### Richmond Hill Community Foodbank and All Saints Church-Community Centre

Deliveries of food and personal use items are made to the Richmond Hill Community Food Bank and All-Saints' Community Kitchen/Clothing Closet. The Committee is collaborating with the Manager of the Foodbank and the ACW to draft a number of simple recipes, culturally appropriate, for use by Foodbank clients, helping them to use foods with which they might not be familiar.

### Refugee Sponsorship

We have over the past few years, acting on our own or jointly, sponsored individuals and families from various parts of the world. We have worked with organizations such as, *Canadians Helping Asylum Seekers in Israel (CHAI)* and *Toronto Refugee Affairs Council (TRAC)*. All sponsorship processing was halted due to the pandemic. As of February 2022, we are still awaiting decisions on three Eritrean citizens, some of whom began application in 1998.

While we are justifiably proud of our many and diverse Outreach activities, nevertheless, our recent Reimagining report concluded that, as one of four major priorities, we should improve our communication with the community about what we do and improve our understanding of what the community really needs.



## In Conclusion

We conclude, as we began, with our Mission Statement. Our focus will be on striving to live this as nearly as possible, recognizing that the values it enshrines provide the model for us at Holy Trinity both now and in the future.

*We are a vibrant, welcoming Christian community flourishing in God's love through fellowship, outreach, worship, and spiritual growth, in an atmosphere of compassion and mutual respect.*



*Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.*

## Appendices

All items listed below are available on the [Holy Trinity Church Website](http://www.holytrinity-thornhill.ca/)<sup>1</sup>

- i. [Our history](#)
- ii. [2021 Vestry Report](#)
- iii. [2021 Audited Financial Statements](#) (page 47 of the 2021 Vestry Report pdf)
- iv. [2022 Budget](#) (page 62 of the 2021 Vestry Report pdf)
- v. **Parish Selection Committee Survey Results**  
(<http://www.holytrinity-thornhill.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Trinity-Newsbreak-March-15-2022-Parish-Selection-with-Survey-Results.pdf>)
- vi. **Reimagining Holy Trinity 2030**  
(<http://www.holytrinity-thornhill.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Reimagine-Update-to-Parish-December-2021.pdf>)

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.holytrinity-thornhill.ca/>