



Welcome to The Church of St. Matthias and St. James the Apostle

Let this be your guide to the notable elements of our building and its history.

St James the Apostle was the second Anglican parish in Guelph. As a breakaway from St. George's, St. James embraced the Oxford Movement with a desire to restore a pre-Reformation richness of liturgy. Building began in April, 1891 with the 1st service held Dec 20th, 1891. It was completed April 1892 at a cost of \$15,000 (\$2,000 over-budget.) The initial design was completed by R. C. Windeyer, a Toronto architect. Plans were ultimately changed to reduce costs with a local builder, John Day, responsible for the final construction. Originally the altar, facing east, was intended to rest where the balcony (now used for organ pipes) was placed; the nave would cover what is now the parking lot.

The stone was acquired from a Guelph quarry – owned by a parishioner, William Slater. The slate for the roof was imported from the UK, an addition of \$300 to the budget. Years later, when patching was needed, a parishioner (Florence Hutton) donated slate from her family farm.

In 1966-67, major work was needed on the roof and steeple. The floor joists in the Parish Hall, which had been set into the stonework, were found to be rotting. This was likely the consequence of the land sloping towards the building due to changes in the elevation of the road and sidewalk. Regrading and tiling were necessary.

The font is one of over a hundred donations made to the church, evident by the numerous plaques you will see throughout the building. In this case it was gifted in 1894 and made from stone extracted from the Elyra Quarries in Ohio. The Gothic back-drop behind the font was crafted by Stephen Truscott while imprisoned in the early 1960's at the Ontario Training School in Guelph. The brass rail was donated by the church school.

The only significant addition to the church building was a new entrance off the parking lot incorporating an over-sized elevator. This was to better accommodate the transportation of people and coffins upstairs to the church. Today it also helps accommodate transporting music and sound equipment, even a baby grand! The stone came at no cost from the City stone graveyard in 2001. The stone mason was John Smith. The project required the re-locating of a pair of stained glass windows further along the west wall with back lighting required.

Rood screens were not common in Canadian Anglican churches. Our second hand rood screen was donated by a grief stricken mother following WW1. Unfortunately, it is not in keeping with the building's original Gothic architecture. A careful study of the writing will reveal that although the lettering to be mounted was correct the positioning of the letters has errors. The capital “C” and “T” were reversed between the two words “Thy and Courts”, currently reads “Chy Tourts”. Also the “u” in Courts is upside down and appears as an “n”. The whole script should read “How Amiable Art Thy Courts Lord of Hosts”. Our stain glass windows were all donated by parishioners honouring various people and occasions. They vary in age from 1900-1980. The oldest are the four small ones on the west wall.



Of our many memorials one of our smallest and perhaps the one most interesting is located on the west wall under the Baker tablet. A small wooden cross, it commemorates the gift of insulation.

Another memorial of interest is a plate commemorating the birth of Margaret Francesca, Princess of the Netherlands. She was born in Ottawa where the Dutch royal family sought refuge during the war. The plate was donated by Dutch soldiers, stationed in Guelph during the 2nd World War. It is located under glass in a mitred wooden box on west wall to right of Smith windows and left of little windows.

The mural around the south windows/altar - symbolizing the four gospels - was created by an unknown muralist following the addition of the rood screen. During the renovations of 1966 - 67 some parishioners considered painting over the mural as it had faded and become dust-covered. Instead two determined members scaled the wall to clean it. It has remained unchanged.

Our organ is a Casavant Opus 2630, and was constructed specifically for St James by the acclaimed Casavant Freres of St-Hyacinthe Quebec (1960). There are over 2,000 pipes varying from 3 in to 26 ft; 8 tons in weight with pipes made of a spotted metal consisting of lead, zinc, and tin. The installation starting January 1961, took 7 weeks to complete. The **Great organ and Pedal organ sections** were installed free-standing in the former balcony. The **Swell organ section** is enclosed in a solid oak swell chamber. The **Positive section** behind the choir was designed specifically to assist in the singing of the liturgy as well as complimenting the other divisions of the instrument.



In 1988, after observing “excessive groaning”, a parishioner and engineer, Peter Chisholm determined that roof supports had been severely weakened from a century of moisture. Repair required that sections of the roof had to be raised in order to re-secure it to the perimeter walls. If you look carefully you can see metal panes secured to sections of the wooden beams. In order to obtain funding for the project St. James was designated in 1989 under the Ontario Heritage Act.

The **window** above the sacristy door – Virgin and Child - is the most original window in the church. It was created by Gordon Couling a significant figure in Guelph heritage and art through the late sixties and seventies; its design is based on a Mother's Union Banner, our oldest banner created by 2 parishioners over 30 years ago for the 100th anniversary of the Mother's Union.

Following the second World War, the parish hired Group of Seven artist A. J. Casson to create a Memorial scroll (on the short wall to the left of the west wall doorway) recording the names of some 225 men and women from St James who served in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Outside on the south side of the building is our Scattering Garden – established in 1999. This raised garden is used for the scattering of burial ashes. This service is free upon request. The garden is maintained by a small contingent of parishioners.