

# *St. Andrew's*

**Presbyterian Church**

**St. Lambert, Quebec**



## **CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE**

## Introduction

We thank you for interest in St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Saint-Lambert. The congregational profile has been prepared by the Search Committee composed of individuals of different ages, backgrounds and life experiences. The objective of this document is to introduce you to our church community as well as to the city of Saint-Lambert and the surrounding towns in the Montérégie area which is commonly called the South Shore of Montréal.

The Rev. Dr. Roland DeVries is currently serving as our interim moderator, subsequent to the retirement of our long serving minister, The Rev. Dr. Barry Mack, at the end of September 2022.

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church was founded in 1925 by continuing Presbyterians. This new congregation began worshipping in St. Lambert High School (now St. Lambert Elementary School) before completing construction of the present building in 1927. We celebrated our 98<sup>th</sup> anniversary this past January (2023). Our congregation is small but mighty in spirit and dedication. We are a faithful group of believers who endeavour to serve God by serving others, worshipping together and teaching His word.

We acknowledge with respect the land on which St. Andrew's Church stands and our congregation resides. It has been a site of human activity for thousands of years. We acknowledge and honour our place on territories once under the sole care and stewardship of Indigenous peoples. There are three Mohawk communities in the Montérégie region: Akwesasne, Kahnawake, and Kanesatake.

## Our neighbourhood

In 2021, the population of the *Agglomération of Longueuil* was estimated at 435,500. The agglomeration consists of the main city Longueuil, population 254,000 with its three boroughs Greenfield Park, Le Vieux-Longueuil and Saint-Hubert, as well as, the cities of Saint-Lambert (22,500), Brossard (91,500), Saint-Bruno de Montarville (26,500) and Boucherville (41,000).

Saint-Lambert is situated in the Montérégie region of Québec on the South Shore of the St. Lawrence River across from the Island of Montréal. Saint-Lambert offers a small town feeling with its downtown "village" which has many restaurants, cafés, boutiques, drug-stores, a grocery store, a butcher shop and several banks built around city hall and two parks. Several malls, grocery chains and big box stores are a short distance from this mostly residential city.

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Saint-Lambert is also close to all the cultural and historical advantages of the city of Montréal. One can easily get to Montreal by bus, metro (that's what our subway is called) or the commuter train. We are also close to the three vehicle bridges (two with bike paths) which you can take to Montréal as well as to highways that lead to Quebec City, the Eastern Townships and even New York (30 minutes by car to the border) and Vermont.

The city of Saint-Lambert is very family oriented and offers many cultural, sport and family activities. There is a library with books in both English and French one block from the church. There are many parks in Saint-Lambert as well as an indoor pool at the sports centre and two outdoor pools and splash pads. The sports center also houses a gym for training and an arena. There are two golf courses (one public and one private), a curling club and a lawn bowling association. Many bike paths take you to the different areas of the Montérégie region including one that runs alongside the locks of the Saint-Lawrence Seaway. In the winter, one can snowshoe or cross-country ski on the public golf course and the ski hills are not far by car. Dog owners are happy to take their dogs to the two dog parks where they can run free.

Several elementary and secondary schools are within walking distance from the manse, both public (English or French) and private (French). There is also in Saint-Lambert an English CEGEP (pre-university and technical school) - Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel (College of General and Professional Education), Champlain College.

There are several medical clinics and dental clinics in Saint-Lambert and Charles-Lemoyne Hospital is about two kilometers away in Greenfield Park.

## **Congregational Survey Results**

The Search Committee sent out an extensive survey that has been prepared by the National Church (PCC). The questions covered the many different aspects of the life of this church community. People responded online or completed the printed version of the survey.

The survey was sent to 40 members and adherents. Our response rate was 35%. Respondents were asked to describe among other things, why St. Andrew's is important to them and how this community nurtures their faith and their sense of community (both in terms of fellowship and in terms of outreach). They were also asked to identify the most important qualities for the minister that we are seeking. The answers to the survey have been integrated into the following sections of this document.

Concerning the pastoral skills and interest inventory, there are limitations to the statistical validity of the results due in part to the small number of respondents to the survey and also to the fact that not all the respondents completed the rating of all the skills and interests that were listed. However, we are reasonably sure that the first six items represent the desires of those who completed the survey.

## **The People of St. Andrew's**

St. Andrew's congregation is composed of a multi-cultural group of people of different ages and from diverse backgrounds. We are an ageing community, but we also have a few young families. We believe that we are called to serve God by worshipping and praying together, studying God's word and by helping others both within the church family, but also those in the community and beyond who are in need. Some of our members live in the city of Saint-Lambert, but the majority live in the surrounding area, the city of Brossard and the agglomeration of Longueuil (Greenfield Park, and Saint-Hubert). Others travel from cities outside of this immediate area.

When all the churches in Quebec were closed by the Québec government because of COVID, we began having services on-line. We have maintained this practice even after in-person gatherings were permitted. The on-line services are greatly appreciated by members and adherents who are not able to attend due to health or other reasons. We were able to upgrade our technological equipment thanks to a grant from the Presbytery of Montréal and our Special Projects Fund.

The volunteers at St. Andrew's are a dedicated group. They help with worship, sing in the choir, teach Sunday school, serve at coffee hour, provide transportation to services, help maintain the buildings (inside and out) administer the finances, manage Fundscrip, ensure that the church is clean, manage the rentals, etc. The members of session are a committed and steadfast group who continue to provide good leadership of the congregation since our minister's retirement and ensure that all the jobs get done, often by filling in when necessary.

St. Andrew's is involved in caring for those in need in the community through Ecumenical Community Services (ECS) (Food bank, transportation to medical appointments, etc.). One of our members is the coordinator of the Food bank and several other members are involved, doing the shopping and





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delivering food. Last Christmas, 195 food vouchers were distributed to families in the area, throughout the year an additional 210 food baskets were delivered to those in need. We were also, in recent time, active in the ecumenical sponsorship of three refugee families (2 from Syria and 1 from Iraq) by the churches in Saint-Lambert.

In terms of poverty, social justice and other outreach, members participate through individual activities, prayer and donations to PWS&D. Special offerings, at our church Anniversary, Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas are earmarked for different organizations who work with the vulnerable, such as CAB (camp d'action biblique) the summer camp of the Presbytery of Québec and a women's shelter in Longueuil. A third of the respondents to the survey felt that we should continue our involvement as we are called to help others and some felt we should be doing more.

St-Andrew's rents space to different community groups, such as AA and Al-Anon as well as for different choirs or musical groups to practice. Our sanctuary is used each year for concerts and recitals during the Classica Festival and by other organizations as well. The sanctuary is chosen because of its beauty as well as the good acoustics. There is both a pipe organ and a six foot grand piano in the sanctuary.

While the majority of the congregants speak English, many are bilingual and different elements during worship are in French (readings and verses of hymns) and both languages can be heard during coffee hour and other activities. Other languages, such as Korean and Portuguese, can also be heard.

## **Congregational Life**

Several respondents to the survey indicated that St. Andrew's is their "home" church where they grew up. The congregation was described as a church that met their spiritual and social needs. Almost all responders indicated that they participated in some aspect of worship and/or social, maintenance or fundraising activities. Health, old age and work schedules can be a limiting factor for participation for some.

Most respondents described St. Andrew's as a welcoming and caring community and that they were invited to participate in the different church activities. But several mentioned that it took time before they felt welcomed and part of the church. Others mentioned that while the congregation is generally



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caring, there is at times a lack of communication between individuals, which can lead to situations where someone is ill, injured, or not feeling well, yet nobody is made aware. Consequently, some individuals may feel neglected and uncared for due to the lack of information sharing. As we go forward, we need to find solutions so that everyone in the congregation feels welcome and cared for.

Through the years there have been many newcomers, mostly from the South Shore of Montreal. Many have left the congregation after moving for work or to be close to family. Those who have stayed have done so because they felt welcomed and the church gave them something that they were missing in their lives.

In the past, St-Andrew's had many exciting, fun and enriching activities (Robbie Burns night, Christmas Bazaar, potluck dinners, Lenten lunches with the other Saint-Lambert churches, Bible studies, Sunday school, piano concerts, etc.). However, COVID restrictions put an end to all of our activities. We have gradually begun to organize activities such as a regular coffee hour, Family Sunday barbecue, Anniversary Dinner, Ladies' Valentine Supper, Choir practices and anthems, and Sunday school. We are well known in Saint-Lambert for having wonderful food! With the number of members and adherents in the congregation, we need to be selective since we are limited in the number of activities that we can organize.



## **The Presbytery of Montréal**

St. Andrew's is located in the Presbytery of Montreal which has oversight of 33 congregations within a 200 km radius of Montreal. The Presbytery meets once a month, except for December, the month that includes Easter and July and August. The Canadian Armed Forces and Presbyterian College located in downtown Montréal, are affiliated with the Presbytery. As well as ministers serving congregations, members include the ordained staff of Presbyterian College. St. Andrew's is represented by a representative and an equalizing elder at the Presbytery. The Presbytery of Montréal is one of the five Presbyteries forming the Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario, which Synod meets once every two years usually in the month of October. All members of the Presbytery are automatically members of the Synod and are expected to attend the Synod meetings.

## Church Leadership / Session and Board

**The Session** consists of a small group of very dedicated elders. Whereas we have received the permission of the Presbytery to switch to term service for elders, this has not been done due to the small size of the pool of elders. Age and physical limitations stop many from being active elders. The Session functions as a whole at regular stated Session meetings at which the Minister moderates the meeting. There is a Clerk of Session to record the decisions of the meetings, as well as a Treasurer for the Session Special Fund. But there are also several sub-committees of the Session:

**Christian Education Committee** is led by a member of Session and includes the Sunday School Coordinator as well as members of the Sunday School teaching staff.

**The Personnel Committee**, comprised of some of the elders on the Session, has the responsibility of finding suitable candidates for job opportunities the Session has requested their help in finding. As well, the personnel committee will address any human resources issues brought to it by the Session, employees, or members of the congregation.

**The Music and Worship Committee** consists of members of Session, including the Minister, along with the Director of Music. This committee makes recommendations to the Session about the order of worship and the general planning for both regular and special services.

**The Nominating Committee** is convened by a member of the Session. The committee consists of representatives from the Session, the Board of Managers and the congregation. They are responsible for suggesting appropriate and willing candidates to serve on the various committees of the church and, after approval by the Session, make recommendations to the congregation at the Annual General Meeting for election.

**The Board of Managers** looks after the temporal and financial affairs of the congregation. The Board is made up of members of the congregation that are duly elected by the congregation at the Annual General Meeting. The Board consists of a Convenor who calls and runs the meetings, the Treasurer who pays all the bills and keeps a record of all the revenues and expenditures, and the Recording Secretary who keeps minutes of all the meetings of the Board. The Board collects and deposits, into the Church bank account, all offerings received. The Board pays the minister monthly, in advance, as first charge on the Church account, with all other invoices being paid thereafter, as finances allow. The Board, in consultation with the Session will prepare an annual budget to present to the congregation at the Annual General Meeting of the congregation. The Board has been authorized by the congregation to invest surplus funds in the Consolidated Portfolio of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. It is the responsibility of the Board members to

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care for the place of worship and the other ecclesiastical buildings owned by the congregation. The buildings of the congregation, more specifically the Church, Christian Education Centre and Manse are free and clear of debt.

**The Minister** is an ex-officio member (voice but no vote) of all the committees of the church.

## Worship

Our regular worship service is Sunday from 11:00 to 12:00 with a traditional liturgical celebration. Special services are celebrated on, Easter Sunday with a trumpeter added to the music in the service, the Sunday before Remembrance Day and on Christmas Eve.

In the past (pre-Covid) we also had special services on Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday (ecumenical service with a march between churches in St. Lambert). Communion is celebrated every quarter as well as at Christmas and is an important element of our worship life. Our service (Call to worship, readings, hymns, etc.) is projected on a large screen for those in the sanctuary and we have our own YouTube channel so those unable to make it to the service can watch on-line. Music is provided by our Director of Music and the choir sings anthems on special occasions.



It is a requirement of the Presbytery of Montréal that each congregation within its bounds include at least one element of French in each service. We often sing some hymn verses in French and do one of the readings in French with English on the screen so those that don't understand French can follow along in English.

## Christian Education

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church has a team of volunteers who are passionate about sharing the gospel with children through Christian Education Sunday School. Comprised of four members who are dedicated to their mission, this group feels privileged and blessed to share their love of the gospel with children. The Sunday school curriculum used at St. Andrew's church is called "Seasons of the Spirit". The "Seasons of the Spirit" program is designed to explore the meaning and mystery in the Bible and help inspire and nurture living faith in younger children.



## Facilities

The respondents to the survey appreciate the beauty of our church buildings and all the space that we have to meet both in the church building and in the Christian Education Centre (CEC) across the street. But there is a concern among members about the cost and energy necessary for the upkeep of the buildings.

**The Manse** is a detached, two story, three-bedroom home with a full basement and the Board of Managers is proposing that the manse be converted from an oil-fired furnace and hot water tank to an electric furnace and tank. This will reduce our operating costs and our greenhouse gas emissions. We are in the process of making arrangements with a contractor to do repairs, painting all the rooms and sanding and re-finishing of the floors at the manse, subsequent to the current minister, of thirty years, moving out. The driveway, walkways, front porch, backyard patio, French drain, roof and eavestroughs have all been re-done over the past few years and are in good condition.

**The CEC** lower hall is where the Sunday school meets and where the choir rehearses on Wednesday evenings. The large upper hall of the CEC is rented to the Club de Bridge de St-Lambert. There is an additional room in the CEC that is available for church meetings and is used by periodic renters. There is designated parking for the minister beside the CEC building.

**The Church** interior is shown in the attached photo, you get a sense of the sanctuary space.

There is seating for 236 people which includes the balcony. We have a pipe organ which was originally a theatre organ in Montréal, reworked by Franklin Legge in the early '30s at which time it was installed in St. Andrew's. There is also a 6-foot grand piano in the sanctuary, Korean built, Young Chang. We have remote controlled cameras and a professional soundboard, projector, screen



and sound system in the sanctuary that is used at every service for livestreaming on YouTube. There is a vestry for the minister and a separate general office for the running of the church. The lower hall, which includes a kitchen, is where we hold our many lunches and occasional suppers. We also have a permanent parttime renter of the lower hall, as well as periodic onetime renters. All our rooms have wi-fi access. We maintain a website with up-to-date information about St.

Andrew's for our own members, but also to make ourselves known to those seeking a place to worship in the reformed tradition.

## **Description of Gifts and Skills in the Minister We Are Seeking**

St. Andrew's is seeking a minister who is prayerful, has a strong faith in God and who is Biblical in his/her teaching. He/she should play an important role in Christian education through worship, preaching, Bible study and Sunday School.

He/she should be self-reflective, open to learning and adapting as required to the needs of the congregation. We also want our minister to be caring and welcoming to new and existing members. It is important that he/she be inclusive and able to relate to individuals of all ages, diverse backgrounds and different socio-economic levels and be open to discussing new ways to enhance our spiritual identity. Visitation to the sick and shut-in, both in their homes and in the hospital would also be a priority for our new minister.

He/she must be able to communicate in French or be willing to learn the language. A minister who does not speak French will be required by the Presbytery to take a one-month French immersion course, which includes boarding with a French speaking family during that time. The costs are paid by the Presbytery. The minister's spouse, if not bilingual, is also encouraged to attend, although the spouse's fees are not covered.

We seek a leader who would help us determine our mission as a congregation and then work with us as we seek to implement that vision. We also want a leader who can help the different members and adherents of the congregation identify their gifts and inspire them to use their gifts. It is important that he/she believe in collaboration and encourage participation in all aspects of congregational life. It is also important that our new minister be able to help us identify needs and areas of growth both within the church and in the community and then guide the congregation in addressing these issues.

## **Looking to our future**

There is a desire for the church leaders and the congregation to build on our many strengths at the same time as focusing on growth, attracting newcomers, especially teens, young adults and families with young children. To do this we need to:

- Continue to care for each other and be welcoming to newcomers;
- Improve communication among ourselves so that those who are sick, hurting or feeling lost are not neglected;
- Identify and use fully our many talents and gifts;

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- Increase our activities, both spiritual (Ex. Bible studies both in person and via Zoom, activities for children, a caring circle, a prayer chain, etc.) and social as well as fundraising;
- Continue our implication in our neighbourhood community in order to help the vulnerable in our community;
- Continue our implication in the larger community, in our province and throughout the world through prayer, donations and involvement in special projects as needed;
- Focus on outreach.

The feedback received from the congregation on the Congregational Self-analysis Survey form has revealed some concerning issues for the Session and it is hoped that we can address these issues in a responsible manner with the guidance and assistance of our new minister. We have been doing things the same way for a long time and while at the same time we have been moving forward, clearly there is still more work to be done. We look forward to the challenge of finding a new minister and beginning a new journey of fellowship and hope with the guidance of the holy spirit.

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## Appendix A: Language Profile

Below is a table showing the breakdown of the population of the Agglomeration of Longueuil by official languages.

<b>Agglomeration of Longueuil Language Profile</b>			
Knowledge of Official Languages			
Language	Male	Female	Totals
English only	8,870	8,705	17,575
French only	69,585	89,125	158,710
English & French	118,400	110,365	228,765
Neither English nor French	2,445	3,500	5,945
Total	199,300	211,695	410,995

## Appendix B: Congregational Profile Form

Attached hereafter is the Congregational Profile Form:

This form includes the *Pastoral Skills and Interest Inventory* form. Please note that before sending out the survey to the congregation we added one additional item – Doctrinally orthodox / traditional, so our form has 19 rankings rather than 18.

## Appendix C: Map

The map shows the location of St. Lambert on the South Shore of Montréal and also lays out the main target area for our ministry in the Agglomeration of Longueuil.