

As a thank you for the use of the Chapel they insulated and relined the whole basement to make it dry and warm. Eventually the Lutherans built a church of their own just south on Victoria Park Avenue. St. Jude's continued in its Christian mission by offering the space to other congregations including the Macedonian Bulgarian Orthodox Church and subsequently the Polish National Catholic Church. In the early 1990's the outer structure was showing signs of wear and animal damage and the exterior siding, steeple and supporting beams were restored with great care to replicate the original materials and building methods.

The early structures of St. Margaret's and Christ Church had been totally destroyed by fire years ago leaving St. Jude' Chapel the only original church building in Scarborough and was so designated under the terms of the Ontario Heritage Act as one of Scarborough's fifty most historic structures. The Heritage Conservation Award was presented Monday, February 20, 1995.



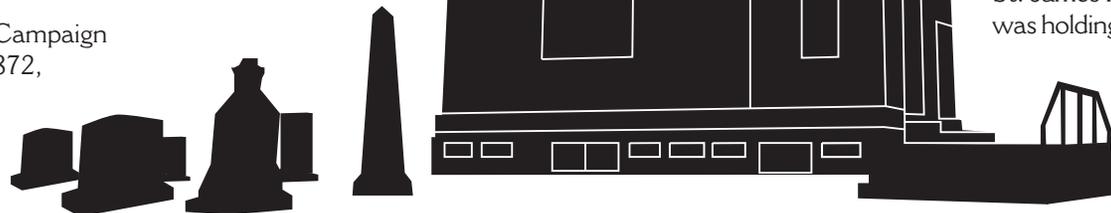
T.B. Higginson in his biography of the Rev. William Stewart Darling has this to say: *There is a handsome memorial in Holy Trinity, but for me his best and most beautiful memorial is in Scarborough – the original St. Jude's – long may it stand to remind us of the Rev. Wm. Stewart Darling "of blessed memory".*

Your help is needed...

Unfortunately, due to the vicissitudes of weather (basement flooding and roof leaking) plus the constant use of various groups have left the interior of the Chapel badly damaged. If we are to preserve the building, work must proceed quickly to restore it to its former beauty.

As custodian of this treasure, the parish of St. Jude is conducting a campaign to raise funds for the interior restoration of St. Jude's Chapel. Your help and interest would be very much appreciated.

For more information on the Restoration Campaign please call the Church Office at 416-755-5872, Monday to Friday 9am-12 noon.



The Chapel of St. Jude *~1848~*

As you approach the door of the Chapel take a moment to look about. The church yard is quiet but as you look beyond this you will find houses, apartment buildings, also a busy road where motor vehicles and buses scurry up and down. Although you are standing on a hill you will not be able see the valley below. Now close your eyes for a moment and imagine the scene scarcely 175 years ago. From this vantage point you would see for miles down to the lake, the land dotted with small farms inhabited by immigrants principally from the British Isles and in particular Ireland.

Living was harsh and farming the land accomplished through the use of primitive spades, hoes and forks, the first reaper not appearing until 1851. Wolves roamed the countryside both day and night and often sheep and chicken flocks were depleted by these animals. Life was a challenge not only for the men but as much for the women who had to cook the food on an open fire or in Dutch ovens. The spinning and weaving of cloth was accomplished in the home and even soap was made by the women using wood ashes mixed with tallow. Their houses were lighted by tallow candles also home made. It was not until much later that kerosene lamps were used. Bedtime came early because of the lack of light.

Children sickened easily and many of the families buried more than one child before the age of five as attested in the graveyard. Their spiritual lives were enriched by meetings in homes by itinerant clergy and when the weather permitted in large outdoor gatherings. As early as 1816 records show that Dr. John Strachan of St. James Parish Church, Town of York, was holding divine service once a month at Ketchum's store (now York Mills) but he worried about the spiritual lives of those in outlying districts.

With his encouragement the mother Church of England in Scarborough, St. Margaret's, was erected at West Hill in 1833 followed by the building of Christ Church. At this time the Wexford community's worship was tended to by the Rev. William Darling who also serviced the parishes of St. Margaret's and Christ Church. He encouraged the Wexford parishioners to build their own church. Patrick and Ann Parkin were moved to donate a parcel of land which until this time had served as a family burial ground and which held the grave of their infant son, Edward, who was buried March 22, 1832, to permit the construction of a church building and the establishment of a permanent cemetery. The site was on a hill and consisted of "one acre – part of Lot number thirty-five in Concession D of the said Township of Scarborough commencing at the S/W corner of Henry Howell's garden."

The Rev. William Darling recalled an ancient Scottish Gothic church he had known as a child and the construction was commenced in 1848 based on his plans. Robert Boyd was the chief carpenter with help from local farmers Edward Armstrong, Joseph Armstrong, Mark Barker, Tim Devonish, Robert Hunter, John Martin, Sam Martin, Alec Moffatt, John Parkin and Josh Wilson (the graves of many of this group can be found in the cemetery to this day). Robert Boyd and Edward Armstrong became the first Wardens.

The 20 x 40 foot church was built without a basement and to seat about 60. The plank walls were hand chiseled to look like cut stone, a material considered too expensive for the pioneers. Many of the beams show to this day the marks of the axes used to shape them. An interesting feature is the five foot doorway which leads to the Sacristy and one wonders whether this was true to the original church in Scotland. The only part of the little church not fashioned by the local farmers was the steeple and bell tower of Norman design which was built in York and transported to the church on two sleighs, an arduous journey taking three days. There appears to be no written record of how the steeple was hoisted into place but it was no doubt by primitive means. The church was heated by a pot-bellied stove which sat in the centre of the nave. The pews were small to seat a "tight four" and were made of pine. The little church came into being – small but beautiful in design.

The deed was officially given to the Right Rev. John Strachan, Lord Bishop of Toronto, on March 15, 1849 by Mrs. Ann Parkin, now a widow. The first marriage in the church was on November 29, 1849 between Francis Clements and Sarah Thompson. An undated newspaper item says the following: "...right from the first, though St. Jude's was small in number, she was great in spirit."

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In a report written in 1853, the church's second pastor, Rev. Wm. Belt, estimates Scarborough population at 6,000 – double that of 1851 and an average congregation at St. Jude's of 50. He notes that in 1853 St. Jude's devoted its entire collection to paying off the church debt.

A quotation from the records of A. Gavaller in 1864 is as follows: "On Friday we were refreshed by the arrival of Mr. Cayley from Whitby and three of us drove to St. Jude's, a small church near the town line of York, about 8 miles from Toronto. It was too dark to see the outside of the church but within, for its size and material the most perfect gem and so nicely decorated...."

Changes to the little church came at a fairly rapid pace. In 1929 a basement was dug under the church and a furnace was installed to replace the old pot-bellied stove. At this time the interior of the church was remodeled and the two Boyd daughters gave strong financial assistance supplying stained glass windows, a new altar, prayer desk and hardwood floors. The windows were created by Robert McCausland Limited, Toronto. The windows behind the altar are of Our Lord and Teacher in the centre with the female symbolic figures of Faith and Hope on either side. Large end windows with borders and fields of varied tints of English Cathedral glass with three richly coloured emblems – a Font on the left, a Chalice on the right and in the centre I.H.S.

Four side windows were similar. At the same time walls, ceiling, woodwork and seats were decorated.

St. Jude's remained a country church and the people of the parish were still, in the main, farmers. In the late 1940's when the postwar boom caught up with the district the farms were gradually replaced by industries and large housing developments. In 1950 there were 79 members of St. Jude's – by 1958 there were 1,000 families. In 1952 there were only 2 baptisms but 65 in the last four months of 1953. It was time for a new church and one was erected on the S/E corner of the property. The congregation were thrilled with their new quarters but had special feelings for the little church. A devoted group of men spent hours restoring it to its original beauty and on October 27, 1963 Bishop G.B. Snell re-dedicated it as St. Jude's Chapel.

While the little church was still used for marriages and evensong the first permanent incumbent of St. Jude's the Rev. Canon R. L. McLaren offered the use of the Chapel to the Lutheran Church as they were yet to build a church in this area. Also offered were the loan of communion vessels and the hall and kitchen of the new church for banquets. The basement of the Chapel was used for Sunday School classes by the Lutherans but it was damp and cold.