

# HONOURING THE PAST

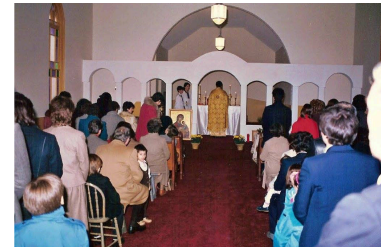
In the late 1970's and early 1980's a handful of Greek families held intermittent church services in Orillia at St. James Anglican Church. Most times it was once a month on Sunday afternoons. Three priests held these services. Fr. Philip Giffin was the first; Fr. Angonstine the second; and Fr. Stavros Moschos the third.



In late 1982, Metropolitan (then Bishop) Sotirios, received a letter from the late Bertha Heliotis stating her willingness to donate \$20,000.00 towards the establishment of a Greek Orthodox Church in this area. The Bishop organized a meeting at the Holiday Inn in Orillia. He invited members of the Greek Canadian Northern Association and the Barrie districts Greek Canadian association as well as all other Greek families. The meeting was well attended and the Bishop spoke about the need to organize and establish a Greek Orthodox Community in the area. He also informed them that a member in the area had pledged a sizeable amount towards the establishment of a church somewhere central in Simcoe County.



The impetus of this meeting and the enthusiasm of Fr. Stavros encouraged the faithful to start holding services at St. James Anglican Church twice a month. The committee and Fr. Stavros began investigating sites to either build or rent a premise to conduct services. A number of sites were looked at in Orillia but none proved to be suitable. Finally, Fr. Stavros announced that he had discovered the perfect location and premise for the Church. He took the committee to the present site of the church and said that Bishop Sotirios would speak personally to the Anglican Bishop of Ontario about securing this premise at a reasonable rent.



The committee thought the location was ideal but the refurbishing of the long abandoned Anglican Church would be costly. Nevertheless it was agreed that the proposed refurbishment would proceed and the committee would embark on a money raising effort. With the \$20,000.00 donation as a starting point the church was on its way.



In December of 1984 the inaugural service was conducted at the Crown Hill location and services were initially held twice per month. Fr. Stavros steered the fledgling community and convinced the founding board to become a full time church with services every Sunday. He guided the Church for 10 years. He was replaced by Fr. Constandinos for a time but returned for a short time before being replaced by Fr. Joseph Friej. Father Joseph remained until his recent death (2006). Fr. Makarios filled in for a few months until a new full time priest was found. Fr. Anatoliy served for a couple of years followed by Fr. George, who served for 7 years.



In November 2016, we received our present Parish Priest, the Rev. Fr. Theodoros Alamanos and under his spiritual guidance, have embarked on a new journey. A journey of honouring the past but looking toward a bright and exciting future.