

“Come and you will see...”

Deliberations

in favour of

Evangelising St. Jude’s

Contents

1.	Executive Summary	3
2.	Setting the context	4
	2.1 Background	4
	2.2 Mutual objectives.....	4
3.	Community growth – It is possible	5
4.	Major observations	6
	4.1 Suggestion 1: A perennial standing Committee	7
	4.2 Suggestion 2: Resources are required	8
	4.3 Suggestion 3: Act based on our strengths.....	9
	4.4 Suggestion 4: Identity	10
	4.5 Suggestion 5: Evolve the culture	11
5.	Next steps	12
	Appendix A – The Survey	13
	Appendix B – The Evangelism Exploration Committee	15

The Evangelism Exploration Committee dedicates this report to Michael Say. Mike died as we were putting together this version of the report. We miss his sage council and bias for action.

1. Executive Summary

St. Jude's has been an active and vibrant community for people of faith since 1839. Thousands of people have passed through its doors since then and it is the calling of the great commission (Matthew 28:18-20) that we continue to share the good news with others.

There was a time when most people in the Oakville community would seek out a place of worship and a large proportion of those people would go to St. Jude's. In Section 2 (on the Background), we note that times have changed and there is a need to actively work with and educate our community, so they are aware of and appreciate that St. Jude's Community is a welcoming option. Given the background, we, as an Evangelism Exploration Committee (EEC) thought about a set of objectives around which we can invite the St. Jude's community to rally. In Appendix B, we answer the question on who participated in the EEC's work and provided some hints about our history with the St. Jude's community and what shaped our role/thinking in respect of this work.

In John 1:39, we are told that Jesus' response to the question about where he was staying was "Come and you will see." The EEC proposes the use of Jesus' response both as a definition and as a call to action. We invite every member of the St. Jude's community to participate in this important action.

For the purposes of this document, Evangelism is being defined as an invitation to those who are not yet a part of the St. Jude's community to "Come and see" what St. Jude's has to offer. "Evangelism is cooperating with the Holy Spirit to help people take steps toward being apprentices of Jesus." (Bowen, 2021) The constant call to action which we will invite every member of the St. Jude's community to share with non-members is to "Come and see" why I love this place.

Having a clear perception of what evangelism meant to us (the EEC), we wondered if there was demonstrable evidence that other church communities were being successful in evangelism. Section 3 succinctly outlines our finding with respect to ten (yes, TEN) Anglican Churches in Canada! This bolstered our confidence that it is possible to deliberately plan and evangelize.

The EEC respects the breadth of the St. Jude's community and wanted to engage the community in the thinking process. To this end, a survey was created and shared widely (please see Appendix A for the questions asked). Section 4 notes that 85 parishioners were kind enough to share their thoughts and this certainly shaped our recommendations.

From this research, five themes emerged (Section 4.1 to 4.5 inclusive) – a perennial approach, the resources with which to evangelize, a call to act based on our strengths, clarifying our identity and the need to evolve our culture. Section 5 summarizes the EEC's top 17 recommendations.

The EEC's remit was to table a plan in the September timeframe. We believe that we have lived up to that expectation and with the presentation of this report, our work is done and the EEC has been disbanded. Should the recommendations be accepted each of us is willing and eager to participate in a formally constituted Evangelism Committee and to invite the wider community to....COME AND SEE!

2. Setting the context

2.1 Background

Four points stood out for us at the outset of the EEC's work:

- a) To the best of our knowledge, there has been no planned and systematic effort to attract people to St. Jude's for the last twelve years.
- b) There is intense competition for people's time and attention in the modern era. Given this environment, we, the members of St. Jude's need to actively educate people to know that we exist and we welcome newcomers into our community.
- c) The average age of the congregation is increasing and a number of long-time parishioners have retired to other locations or passed on.
- d) It takes time and consistent effort to attract people to a community, retain people in the community and energize the community.

2.2 Mutual objectives

St Jude's parish completed a several week-long exercise in early 2024 to create a Mission Action Plan (MAP). Two of the underlying concerns of the MAP were declining attendance and financial sustainability. The EEC focused on growth.

With that background in mind, we sought to find a set of mutually agreeable objectives.

1. Double the average number of congregants on a Sunday morning by September 30th 2028
2. Grow the number of people in St. Jude's community
3. Ensure that present and future groups are well supported and can thrive in future
4. Build a sustainable evangelism effort
5. Enable everyone to appreciate the role in evangelism
6. Support the MAP.

3. Community growth – It is possible

The EEC looked for examples of churches that are growing. We did some homework and here are ten, Canadian Anglican Church based examples where some form of creativity, outreach and personal effort yielded favourable results.

	Anglican Church	A snapshot of the Learning/outcome
1	St. Paul's, Bloor St. Toronto, ON	Welcome newcomers, escort them to their seats, the Rector hosts newcomers meet and greet at her home quarterly, three Sunday services (including a contemporary music service), English as a second language courses, comprehensive website, massive success.
2	St. Mary Magdalene, Napanee, ON	Organized the "Let Your Light Shine" youth outreach using grants to support their youth and High School program.
3	St. Barnabas, New Westminster, BC	Hosted a play-based early childhood program that helped families connect in a friendly, relational setting.
4	All Saints - Dain City, Welland, ON	Held an event funded through grants thereby creating an environment for families to visit and connect.
5	St. Stephen's, Saskatoon, SK	Implemented a creative, accessible outreach to children and families during winter. This contributed to growth in family attendance.
6	Salisbury & Havelock, Petitcodiac, NB	Rolled out youth-centered events such as dances, bike rodeos, themed picnics, etc. and drew in younger people.
7	St. John the Evangelist, Thunder Bay, ON	Shifted toward a missional focus by launching a food bank noticing that children already involved in the food program might be invited to Sunday school.
8	Emmaus Church, Sault Ste. Marie, ON	Fostered a renewed missional identity walking with people, sharing stories, and inviting all into fellowship.
9	St. Jax, Montréal	Focusing on Alpha course, strong youth involvement, space-sharing with nonprofits etc. and attendance grew to around 250.
10	St. John, Willowdale Just north of Toronto	Introduced an English (alongside their Chinese) language congregation, engaging youth, drawing over 300 people and started mission trips and downtown fellowships for younger members.

In summary, evangelism still works in the 21st century – as long as it is engaging and relevant.

4. Major observations

In an effort to ascertain what attracted and kept members of St. Jude's here, the EEC formulated a questionnaire and invited responses. Please refer to Appendix A to see the questionnaire.

As at August 31st 2025, we received responses from 85 parishioners – 15 of which came via direct face to face conversations and 70 came via responses online.

We then aggregated and analysed those responses. Here are the major observations:

	Observations
1	People remember what attracted them to St. Jude's
2	People love the building, the gardens, the music and the traditional services
3	Paradoxically, there is also a desire for alternate forms of music
4	There is a strong desire to see the Church survive and thrive
5	Many people welcome the warmth and friendliness
6	There isn't a singular sense of mission or a unifying identity in the Parish
7	More than 50% of respondents are over 60 years old
8	More than 60% of respondents have been parishioners for over 15 years
9	There is widespread concern about the lack of activities to attract youth
10	St. Jude's has many tangible and intangible assets and we need to leverage them
11	Many people are surprised about the lack of a concerted effort to attract people
12	There is a desire to "change the culture". Some people want to add a more family-focused Sunday morning service, alternative forms of music and worship

Please speak with Genevieve DeCarcenac if you would like more information on the surveys and the messages which they revealed to us.

Based on our analysis, deliberations and the feedback noted above, five major suggestions arose, each of which will now be discussed in the ensuing sections.

4.1 Suggestion 1: A perennial standing Committee

It is too hard to “turn evangelism on and off” periodically. It takes time to invite people to participate, figure out an action plan, act on the plan and drive results.

The EEC therefore suggests that evangelism needs to be a ministry – its own separate perennial ministry represented on Parish Council. It needs to be an ongoing effort, month over month, year over year. Here are some suggestions on the (future) committee’s major role and responsibilities:

Committee Role

- To formulate the St. Jude’s evangelism plan
- To propose targets for the three-year period and each quarter in the period
- To take demonstrable action on that plan each month
- To attract members to the committee and to energize them to take action

Once the plan is approved, the committee’s major responsibilities should include (but not necessarily be limited to):

	Major responsibility	Examples or insights
1	Partner with other groups within the community	Having a full list of all ministries and the work they do will inform the evangelism committee and give them material which can be used in the wider community. Other groups within the St. Jude’s community may have an in-person or an online event. The evangelism committee could use that event as a way to attract people to the community
2	Partner with groups outside the community	Having a relationship with external groups in the community (e.g. the Historical society) will make it easier to connect, to invite and to share the St. Jude’s message.
3	Community Outreach	Engaging in activities that cause people to know about St. Jude’s and to want to “come and see”.
4	Education	Sharing information about the St. Jude’s community
5	Market and communicate	Using a range of traditional and on-line media to let others know about ideas, events and activities.

The EEC is therefore recommending three major actions:

1. establish evangelism as a separate perennial ministry.
2. clarify the committee’s mandate, roles and responsibilities,
3. allow the (future) evangelism committee three months in which to formulate a three-year plan (to December 31st 2028) and generally get itself ready to “rock and roll”.

4.2 Suggestion 2: Resources are required

The new Evangelism team will need resources to fuel its work. Six types of resources are noteworthy:

a) Time

It is to be hoped that several members of the St. Jude's community give freely of their time to support the new ministry. The new Ministry should be given the chance to invite people to join and should actively work to educate, encourage and energize members to take action.

b) Money

The EEC recommends the need for \$2,500 per calendar quarter (\$10,000 per year).

Funding is required to pay for some social media promotion and to offer a stipend to the person/team doing the work. Yes, St. Jude's may, from time to time be fortunate to have one or more parishioners with skills in relevant areas and those individuals may choose to contribute some portion of their time and skill to do the Church's work. Relying on individual charity is however not a reliable or enduring strategy. Individuals get busy, move along, and the work languishes. St. Jude's cannot afford for this ministry to wax and wane. There is a need for constant and continuous service delivery hence the need for funding and a contract assuring the delivery of services, regularly.

c) Print AND Social media

Information about St. Jude's and its ministries need to be shared with the community via both print and social media. While there may be a standard material in print or posted on a website, there is a need to be constantly generating and posting fresh content.

d) Training

Not everyone who joins the committee is likely to be trained and skilled in communication, media and evangelical work. It is therefore suggested that some form of training be made available to committee members from time to time.

e) Focus,

There is a need for formal objectives on a quarterly basis and to that end, there should be leadership that ensures focus on meeting those objectives. It is the constant focus and set of actions that will help the community to recognize the purposefulness with which St. Jude's is acting and will, more than likely, attract like-minded people to this community.

It is therefore recommended that:

4. the Corporation funds the Ministry to the tune of \$10,000 annually.
5. A formal process be set up to quickly generate, review and approve outbound messages,
6. The Communications leader be given access to the St. Jude's social media accounts,
7. A training program be established.

4.3 Suggestion 3: Action based on our strengths

Based on numerous conversations and the completed surveys, seven strengths became apparent:

No.	Strength	Context	Opportunities
1	Building (Architecture)	The building is 143 years old (i.e. historic), spacious, gorgeous, well maintained and creates and reminds people of a holy space. People “feel” comfortable and at peace here.	We can do more with the space, invite more community groups to use the facility to host their events, classes for all ages, particularly young families.
2	Garden	The beauty, peace and serenity experienced in the garden are widely appreciated by thousands of people annually.	Use the garden as a way to connect with the wider community (e.g. the Museum, the bowling club, the Historical Society’s tours), other gardening groups.
3	Traditionalism	We are a traditional “high” Anglican community. Not only do we welcome everyone but we follow a traditional mass.	Culture matters and people want to maintain that sense of traditionalism while expanding the variety of cultural expressions.
4	Music	We have an outstanding Music Director, Assistant Organist, two choirs, organ, piano, the monthly Jazz Vespers service and a rich history of performances.	Have more musical events, allow a wider selection of hymns, allow other forms of music (e.g. a modern band with drums), both free and paid events.
5	Belonging	So many people feel welcomed and have a sense of belonging to this community. When asked, many people refer to St. Jude’s as their “spiritual home”.	There is room to help many others to feel this sense of belonging, not just before the service but also after the service. Encourage calls to people who aren’t able to come to Church.
6	Community services	We have a long history of serving the community in several different ways – e.g. 10,000 meals in 2025 alone, AA use of the building for the past 70 years.	We partner with several individuals and groups and there is immense potential to extend the depth and breadth of our community services.
7	Children and Youth	We’re the one of the few Churches with a youth room AND a youth co-ordinator (Carmen).	There is an opportunity to have a nursery and to encourage other youth oriented activities

Given the foregoing, it behooves the St. Jude’s community to:

8. Document several facts and particular points about our strengths
9. Conduct further work to identify and accentuate our strengths
10. Educate the community about these (and other) strengths

4.4 Suggestion 4: Identity

Our identity is the unique collection of characteristics, beliefs, experiences, and ways in which we interact with each other and the world around us. It defines who we (the St. Jude's community) are and it is paramount to have a clear sense of our collective identity so that we:

- better relate to ourselves and to each other (i.e. let's like ourselves and each other a bit more)
- can articulate who we are to attract people who will embrace and enhance our community

Knowing who we are (our brand) helps to recognize our target audience – their demographics, psychographics, and needs) and to formulate a strategy that connects us (our brand) with people who share our values, our work, our beliefs and our mission.

Briefly, for the purposes of bringing five points to the fore, what sets us (the St. Jude's community) apart from others can be summarised as follows:

- a) Through every season, we have been **a community that welcomes people**. Think about how many British families we have welcomed since 1839. Think about the Syrian family that we welcomed in 2015.
- b) We value our **traditions** (the building, the gardens, the method of worship) and we take pride in the work that we do, together, to keep it all in pristine condition.
- c) We **work hard** in our community – having 44 ministries, including many non-parishioners, says it all.
- d) **Open table** – we welcome everyone to participate in the Lord's supper.

So until further work is done to more closely define and better articulate our identity, we characterize ourselves as being:

Traditional, Anglican followers of Jesus, many ministries, one home.

And tell me again why this matters? Because we (the St. Jude's community) want to serve Jesus by:

- a) letting those people know that we are here to welcome them.
- b) Enlivening our ministries,
- c) Preserving our traditions (the building, the music, the gardens, the way we worship).
- d) Enjoying every encounter with each other and with the Holy Spirit.

The EEC's three major recommendations in respect of our collective identity are:

11. Do the deep work necessary to better articulate who we collectively are
12. Share the proposed statement of identity internally. Let's get comfortable talking about who we are! Ensure there is a broad consensus about the statement of identity with many supporting stories and points of reference. The more comfortable we are, the easier it will be for others to recognize us and for us to tell others about ourselves.
13. Share the proposed statement of our identity far and wide in the Oakville community.

4.5 Suggestion 5: Evolve the culture

The St. Jude's "culture" is the set of things that we, the members of the community, do regularly. We like those things that make us feel comfortable and cause us to "come back for more" each week!

Many parts of our culture are admirable (e.g. the worship, the music) but based on the rumblings coming through from the 85 surveys, many of us also want something a bit different.

The big idea is to cause more people to feel comfortable, more "at home". We have 480 people in our community now and over the next three years, we're talking about doubling it. Causing 900+ people to feel "at home" isn't a trivial task, hence the need to carefully review our culture and **evolve** it so that it becomes broader, more inclusive and more in line with our collective identity.

Evolving it means keeping the parts we like, adding some extras and giving less time and resources to the things that perhaps no longer serve our needs.

The EEC does not have all the answers but five "evolution pathways" for investigation were apparent:

	Desired evolution	Observations
1	Make children, youth and younger families feel welcomed	"Why do I have to be the only teenager in Church on Sundays" Completing the youth room and communicating its presence will go a long way to helping here. We need a Sunday Nursery care and events for younger families
2	More pastoral care	"We miss Harry. No-one replaced him". We need another member of staff and they need to be available to spend a lot of time with people.
3	A priest who lives in Oakville	Frequency of visits and accessibility is key
4	Other types of music	"We like what we have but can we make room for a drum, a guitar and a singer occasionally"
5	Alternate preachers	"Can we invite guest speakers/preachers occasionally".

The EEC's four major recommendations in respect of evolving our culture are:

14. Do the work to figure out the areas in which we want to evolve the culture,
15. Make plans and commitments to accommodate other groups and perspectives.
16. Deliberately go find those groups and invite them to "come and see".
17. Plan an all-parish weekend event to mark our Patronal Festival (October 25 to 26). Invite John Bowen to lead and preach that Sunday; he teaches Evangelism at Wycliffe College Seminary.

5. Next steps

The EEC formally submits this report and its 17 major recommendations for consideration.

- 1) establish evangelism as a separate perennial ministry
- 2) clarify the committee's mandate, roles and responsibilities
- 3) allow the (new) evangelism committee three months in which to formulate a three-year plan (to December 31st 2028) and generally get itself ready to "rock and roll"
- 4) the Corporation funds the Ministry to the tune of 10,000 annually
- 5) a formal process be set up to quickly generate, review and approve outbound messages
- 6) The committee be given access to the St. Jude's social media accounts
- 7) a training program be established
- 8) document several facts and particular points about our strengths
- 9) do further work to identify and accentuate our strengths
- 10) let the community know about these (and other) strengths
- 11) do the deep work necessary to better articulate who we collectively are
- 12) share the proposed statement of identity internally. Let's get comfortable talking about who we are! Ensure there is a broad consensus about the statement of identity with many supporting stories and points of reference. The more comfortable we are, the easier it will be for others to recognize us and for us to tell others about ourselves.
- 13) share the proposed statement of our identity far and wide in the Oakville community
- 14) do the work to figure out the areas in which we want to evolve the culture
- 15) make serious plans and commitments to accommodate other groups and perspectives
- 16) deliberately go find those groups and invite them to "come and see"
- 17) Plan an all-parish weekend event to mark our Patronal Festival the weekend of October 25 to 26. Invite John Bowen to lead and preach that Sunday, he teaches Evangelism at Wycliffe College Seminary.

We respectfully suggest the document be reviewed, amended as appropriate, and formally approved by September 30th 2025. This would make it possible to:

- announce the formation of this ministry just before Thanksgiving (because Thanksgiving is a wonderful theme around which the committee can invite people to "come and see").
- get the (perennial) committee off the ground in early October 2025 so that planning and action can start in 2025.

Appendix A – The Survey

While the EEC's members had several ideas, we wanted to invite other knowledgeable people to offer their insights.

To help the EEC to collect similar information from a range of parishioners, a survey form was created. The form focused on asking several questions that would give members of our parish an opportunity to share their thoughts about the past and the future.

The survey was made available online via the St. Jude's Website. It was also used as a manual aid to in-person conversations with several people.

The survey is replicated here for posterity and to allow readers to reference the types of questions asked.

Here's the survey:

1. What attracted you to St. Jude's?
2. If you had the opportunity to meet someone who was thinking of coming to St. Jude's, what would you say to encourage them to do so?
3. What do you like most about St. Jude's?
4. If it were in your power to do so, what about St Jude's would you change, or what would you suggest we start doing, to reach more people in Oakville and attract them to join us at St Jude's?
5. You make a contribution to St. Jude's. Let's refer to that as your "calling". Please tell us about the kind of people whom you might like to come along and join in this "calling" (e.g. what might their living situation, demographics, interests, or similar, be).
6. Thinking about people who might appreciate being part of our community — what would you say to encourage them to attend a Sunday service? Is there anything that could help or support you in inviting them?

This survey is anonymous. However, to enrich our analysis, we'd be grateful if you would please share some information about yourself. The purpose is for us to get an understanding of the demographics of our respondents and will not be used to identify any individuals.

7. How long have you been coming to St. Jude's?
8. How often do you attend services at St. Jude's?
9. Which service(s) do you attend?
10. How did you hear about St Jude's?
11. What age range do you fall within?
12. What languages are spoken in your home?
13. How long have you lived in Oakville?
14. Which of the following group(s) do you believe resonate the most with your situation?
 - a. Retired
 - b. Employed full-time
 - c. Employed part-time
 - d. Unemployed
 - e. Student
 - f. I live alone
 - g. I live with a significant other
 - h. I live with a partner and we have children in the home
 - i. I am a single parent/caregiver and have children in the home
 - j. I live with my parents in their home
 - k. Other

Appendix B – The Evangelism Exploration Committee

We chose to refer to ourselves as the Evangelism Exploration Committee to distinguish us from the recommended future, perennial Committee.

Just in case you were wondering who contributed to the compilation of this report, we thought we'd share a few tidbits about the team that worked over the past six months to create these concepts.

Name	Years as a Parishioner	Remarks
Chris Punnett	45	Chris has served in many capacities over the years and championed the EEC's work.
Rev. Darcy Lazerte	30	Darcy has both practical and theoretical knowledge of efforts to attract people to a parish.
Henry Popp	14	As a Warden and member of other groups, Henry helped to create, share and vet ideas.
Genevieve De Carcenac	3	Genevieve's Management penchant helped us to frame ideas and messages succinctly.
Michael Say ¹	25	Michael was very instrumental in pointing us to communities where evangelism is a regular activity.
Nicole Marenick	1	Nicole's marketing and social media expertise helped us to focus on ideas that are likely to work.
Robert Maxwell	19	Robert's work with systems and processes helped to push the envelope and document key concepts.

We also thank Joe Marangi and Kevin Coleman who worked with us initially and brought tremendous energy to the process of getting the fundamentals right. Unfortunately for this team, both gentlemen were called to serve on other teams in the St. Jude's community.

Should the Staff and Parish Council accept the recommendations made in this report, the members of the EEC are keen to participate and to offer their services to implement the set of activities required to invite people on a continuous basis to "come and see".

¹ We learnt of Mike's passing in the September 10th EEC meeting while trying to finalize this report and it reminded us that we must do the work of him who sent us while there is light in the world (John 9:4-5). Rest in peace dear brother Mike.