



ST. AUGUSTINE'S
CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Treasures of St. Augustine's

PROJECT ADVANCE NEWS

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For over a century, St. Augustine's Church has graced the landscape of Kitsilano, Vancouver, a testament of faith and a cornerstone of community life. Construction of the current church was completed in February 1932 and its architectural design stands as a testament to the craftsmanship of years gone by. However, beyond its imposing facade lies a trove of treasures that enrich the soul and inspire wonder. Among these treasures are the church's beautiful stained-glass windows. Yet, St. Augustine's is more than just a building; it serves as a beacon of community and faith. As we approach the building's centennial milestone, preserving the integrity of both the building and its surrounding grounds becomes paramount, ensuring that St. Augustine's continues to stand as a cherished home of faith, heritage, and community for generations to come.

The original St. Augustine's Church, established in 1911, was situated at the intersection of Arbutus Street and West 7th Avenue. This church, along with its accompanying school, symbolized the Catholic Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate's dedication to serving British Columbia. It stood proudly, paying homage to Saint Augustine of Canterbury, the Apostle to the English, renowned for leading England's conversion to Christianity.

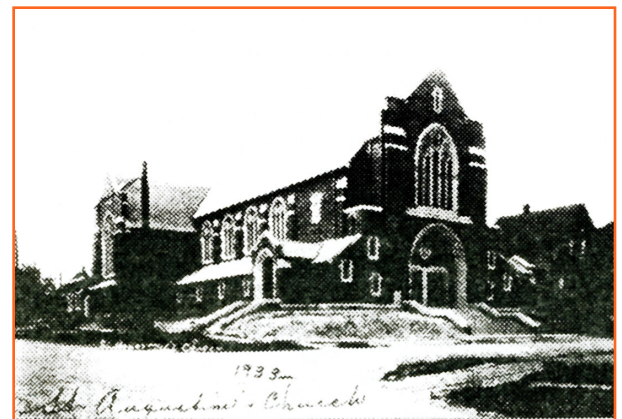
By the close of 1910, the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate had served BC for nearly 50 years, establishing numerous missions, churches, hospitals, and schools. Responding to the area's growth, Archbishop Neil McNeil entrusted the Fairview/Kitsilano parish to the Oblate Fathers in May 1911.

Archbishop McNeil blessed the cornerstone of the original St. Augustine's Church and School on July 23, 1911, with the building opening later that year. The structure housed the Parish Hall, the School with four classrooms, and the Church.

Over time, the parish flourished, prompting the construction of the present-day St. Augustine's Church. In August 1931, Archbishop William M. Duke blessed the cornerstone of the new church, designed by the local architectural firm Twizzle & Twizzle. Inspired by the Gothic Revival architecture of the Cathedral of the Holy Saviour in Bruges, Belgium, the church stood as a testament to architectural excellence.



St. Augustine's Church and School, 1911



St. Augustine's Church, 1932



Stained glass windows, with their beauty and symbolism, have historically held a profound significance in churches. Beyond mere embellishments, stained glass windows serve as profound expressions of devotion and repositories of biblical narratives. They possess the unique ability to filter light, casting ethereal hues and creating a sacred ambiance that inspires worshippers. Light itself, a potent symbol in Christianity, embodies the illuminating presence of Christ amidst the darkness of the world.



At St. Augustine's, some 53 stained glass windows adorn the sacred space. Among them are six majestic windows with colourful hues, eight heraldic pieces boasting splashes of colour, and 44 smaller panes rendered in neutral tones.

Within the sanctuary of St. Augustine's, these magnificent windows imbue the space with aura and reverence. Indeed, their loss would be an irreplaceable blow to both the spiritual and aesthetic fabric of the church.

Despite the profound significance of these windows, the origins of many remain shrouded in mystery. While some were likely gifts from parishioners, others, such as the enigmatic Cardinal Villeneuve window, lack definitive provenance.



Since 1995, St. Augustine's has been recognized as an "A-listed" Heritage Building by the City of Vancouver, protected by a Heritage Conservation Covenant. Among other details, its architectural and historical importance stems from minimal alterations permitted to the exterior, while still serving its original purpose as a church.

The significance of stained-glass colours adds yet another layer of meaning to these sacred artworks.

Red, symbolizing the blood of Christ and the martyrdom of saints, speaks to the ultimate sacrifice of love.

Blue, often associated with the Virgin Mary and the heavens, embodies qualities of wisdom, loyalty, and hope.

Green, representing growth and renewal, evokes images of eternal spring and the victory of life over death.

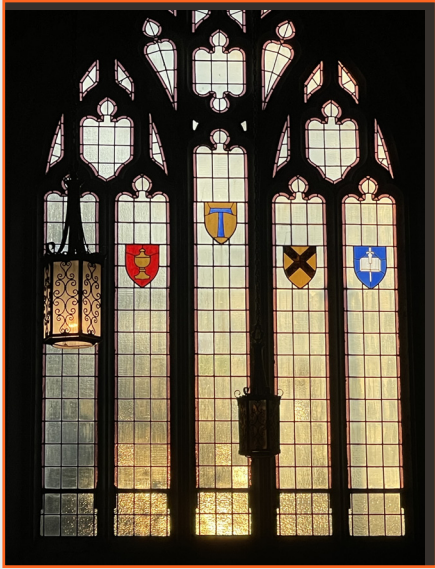
Yellow, the color of divine radiance, conveys themes of glory, power, and transcendence.

Purple, reminiscent of royalty and the suffering of Christ, serves as a poignant reminder of sacrifice and redemption.

White, symbolizing purity and innocence, reflects the divine light of God's presence.

Violet, with its associations of truth and passion, speaks to the depths of human experience and the boundless love of the divine.

Brown, Gray, and Black, though less common, each carry their own symbolic weight, representing renunciation, mourning, and the mystery of death and rebirth.



The translucent windows lining the Nave of St. Augustine's, serve a practical and symbolic purpose. Traditionally, these windows allowed natural light to illuminate the church interior, while heraldic shields displayed within honored families, saints, or ancestral origins.

St. Augustine's holds a special place in our hearts, not only as a place of worship but also as a cherished landmark with a rich history. However, to honour its heritage and serve its purpose effectively, the church requires diligent maintenance and care. As a designated heritage site, it is not only our civic duty but also a sacred obligation as a parish to ensure its preservation for future generations.



Our stained-glass windows require special care and attention. These windows, not only exquisite works of art but also repositories of history and spirituality, face numerous threats to their preservation:

- The weight of the glass and leaded mullions can cause structural strain over time, risking damage to the windows.
- Rust on the heavy steel frames supporting the windows poses a threat to their stability and longevity.
- Exposure to sunlight can fade the vibrant colors of the stained glass, diminishing their beauty and significance.
- Harsh weather conditions, including heavy rain and temperature fluctuations, can accelerate deterioration.

Furthermore, some previous protective measures intended to safeguard the windows have themselves deteriorated, necessitating replacement with more durable materials to ensure long-term protection.



Father Monahan's message from over six decades ago remains as relevant today as it was then. He called upon parishioners to recognize their role in preserving not just a physical structure but a spiritual legacy. Each contribution, he emphasized, is an investment in the future of our faith community and a testament to our commitment to God.

Archbishop Duke echoed this sentiment, urging parishioners to give generously and sacrificially, recognizing the abundant blessings bestowed upon them by Christ. He reminded them that their contributions, however small or large, are a reflection of their gratitude and devotion to God.

As we face economic challenges and uncertainties, let us remember the importance of stewardship and community. Our commitment to preserving St. Augustine's is a testament to our faith and a demonstration of our collective responsibility to safeguard our heritage for generations to come. Through our continued support and dedication, we will ensure that St. Augustine's remains not just a church, but a symbol of faith, community, and outstanding historical preservation.

Dear Parishioners,

Building our Parish Community is the theme chosen for the 2024 appeal. This year, the Archdiocese of Vancouver hopes to raise \$3.1 million in support of Secondary School construction and various Archdiocesan ministries such as Evangelization Programs, Youth and Young Adult Ministry, Social Justice, Family Life Programs, Prison Ministry, Cultural Ministry and First Nations Ministry.

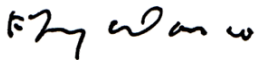
St. Augustine's portion of the appeal is \$61,300 to help with these needs of the diocese. Since funds raised beyond this amount are rebated to the parish, we hope to raise an additional \$63,700 (total goal of \$125,000) so that we can fund the urgent repair, restoration, and sustained maintenance of our church's beloved stained-glass windows (estimated at \$250,000). Our windows have suffered significant damage over time. These windows, steeped in history and spirituality, need our collective care and attention to preserve their beauty for generations to come.

When you give to Project Advance, you are providing both our parish and our Archdiocese with the resources required to carry out our mission of "making disciples" (Mt 28:19), as Jesus commanded us to do. Regardless of its size, every gift truly makes a difference. Whether you are a regular contributor to Project Advance or have never participated before, I want to encourage you to prayerfully support Project Advance 2024 to the best of your ability.

Making a gift to Project Advance is easy. You can use the pledge form below and mail it in or drop it into the Sunday collection basket. Another convenient way is to make your gift online through the our Project Advance webpage at www.projectadvance.ca.

Thank you for your support. May God bless you and your loved ones.

Yours faithfully,



Fr. Ignacy Warias, OMI



Please tear off the form below and mail in enclosed return envelope or drop off at the parish office.

YES, I wish to support Project Advance at St. Augustine's Church

1 WRITE YOUR GIFT AMOUNT

\$ _____

2 SELECT YOUR METHOD OF PAYMENT

- Cheque made payable to "Project Advance"
 Pre-Authorized Debit (Please enclose a void cheque)
 Credit Card _____
Card Holder Name

Card Number

Expiry Date

Signature

Date

3 SELECT WHEN YOU WILL PAY

- Pay the total amount now
 Please divide payments over _____ months
 Charge monthly until I tell you to stop

4 DONOR CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____
