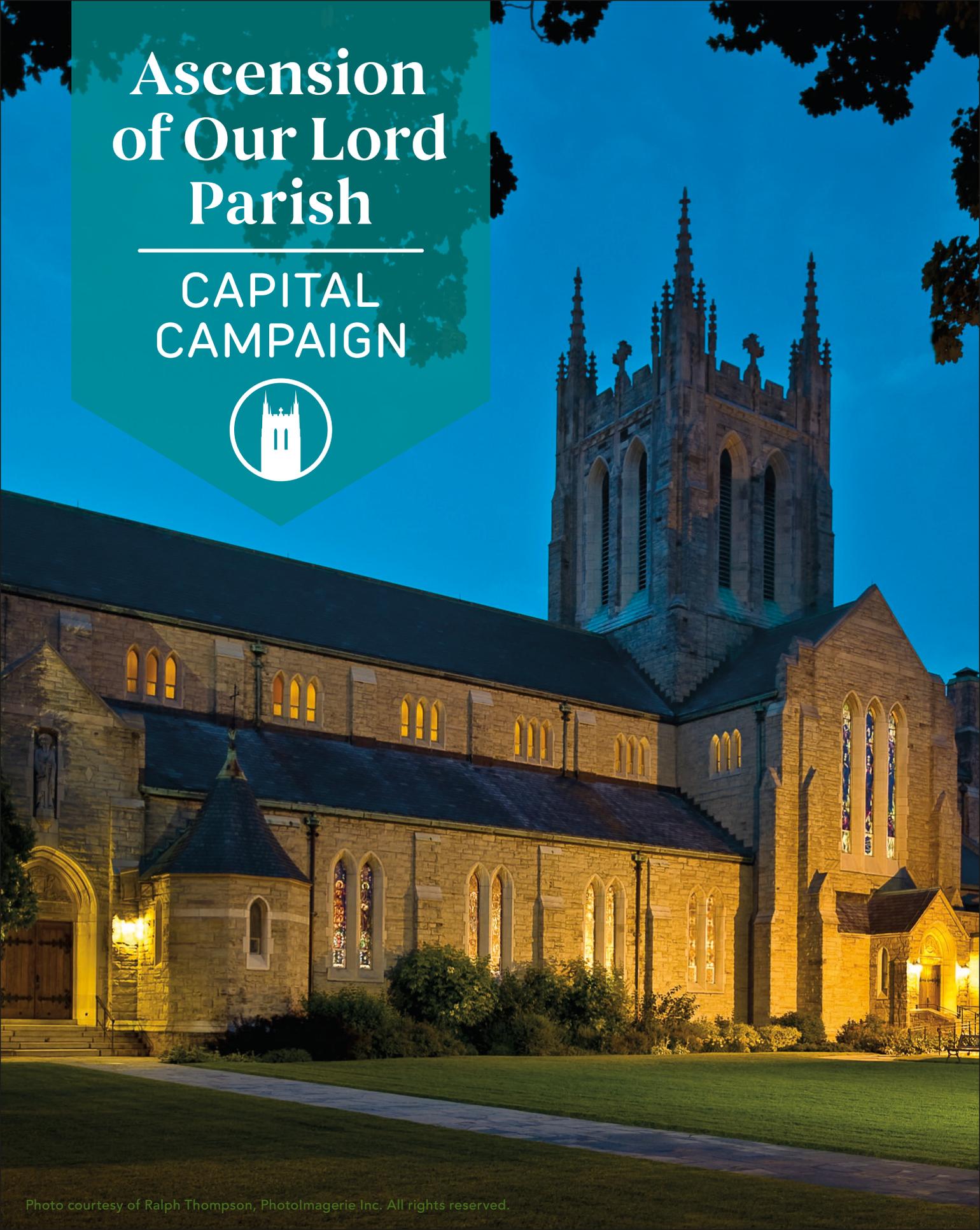


Ascension of Our Lord Parish

CAPITAL
CAMPAIGN



Revitalizing an Iconic Symbol of Our Spirit and Heritage

Within the City of Westmount, and the broader English-speaking Catholic community, Ascension of Our Lord Church is an emblem of unity and purpose.

A vibrant reflection of the drive and determination of some of Westmount's earliest residents, the Church has served as a singular source of spiritual fulfilment, comfort and guidance for over 90 years. It is a haven of peace and solemnity where congregants gather in a spirit of fellowship to celebrate the joy and glory of Christmas and Easter, the sorrow of Good Friday, the christening of a newborn, and the loss of a loved one.

Today, Ascension of Our Lord Church stands as an icon of identity, pride and resolve, distinct in its architecture and resplendence. From its earliest days its liturgies have been enhanced by a sacred music ministry featuring organ and choir that are unparalleled in Montreal's Roman Catholic community.



With age come challenges, and our church now requires major refurbishment and restoration. To secure the future of Ascension of Our Lord, the parish is embarking on a major capital campaign to raise \$1 million.



Laying of cornerstone 1927 Pose de la pierre angulaire

More than 90 Years of Faith and Devotion

In 1926, a group of Irish Catholic residents of Westmount who had been worshipping at a local French parish appealed to the Archbishop of Montreal, the Most Reverend Paul Bruchési, for authorization to establish their own parish church.

Their request turned down by the Archbishop, the dauntless group of citizens set their sights on the Vatican, where, in time, they obtained Papal permission and returned home triumphantly to build their new house of worship.

Having found and purchased a sizeable tract of land from the Grey Nuns on Sherbrooke Street between Clarke and Kitchener Avenues, the trustees raised the more than \$325,000 required to construct the stately 13.5 thousand square foot Ascension of Our Lord parish church. The cornerstone was laid in October of 1927, and the first Mass was celebrated in an almost-completed church at Christmas of 1928.

Today, the congregation is made up of some 700 families, while its Sunday School provides religious instruction weekly to 130 students from pre-school age through Grade 6.

In addition to its varied pastoral, educational and musical ministries, Ascension of Our Lord reaches out to the community at large in a variety of ways: parishioners lend their support to numerous deserving organizations, including Benedict Labre House, St. Willibrord's Food and Clothing Bank, Welcome Hall Mission, and the Share the Warmth/Partageons l'espoir organization.



A Unique Monument with a Rich Spiritual, Social and Architectural Legacy

According to Bergeron Gagnon, cultural heritage consultants, the Ascension Church's neo-Gothic design rivals some of the finest ecclesiastical work executed in this style in Quebec.

Nestled on a wonderful green space that sets it apart from its surrounding urban landscape, Ascension of Our Lord Church stands as an impressive and timeless landmark in the heart of Westmount. The church has been described as one of the most beautiful examples of religious architecture in Montreal. Among its most distinctive characteristics and features are:

- its unique tower adorned with ornate carvings, which stands apart for its atypical location rising over the sanctuary at the back of the church;
- its towering, neo-Gothic nave, vaulted ceilings and stately arches and pillars;
- its magnificent stained glass windows depicting the Crucifixion, the Ascension, Christ the Lord, and the Virgin Mary, complemented by its amber-coloured windows that infuse the church interior with a warm, golden glow;
- its splendid Casavant Frères organ fitted with more than 3,880 pipes measuring from a few inches to 32 feet in length and designed to be in perfect harmony with the church's awesome acoustics.

A parish church, historic landmark, work of art, and living symbol of Catholic stewardship all embodied in one splendid structure, Ascension of Our Lord is truly a treasure of intrinsic beauty and grandeur.

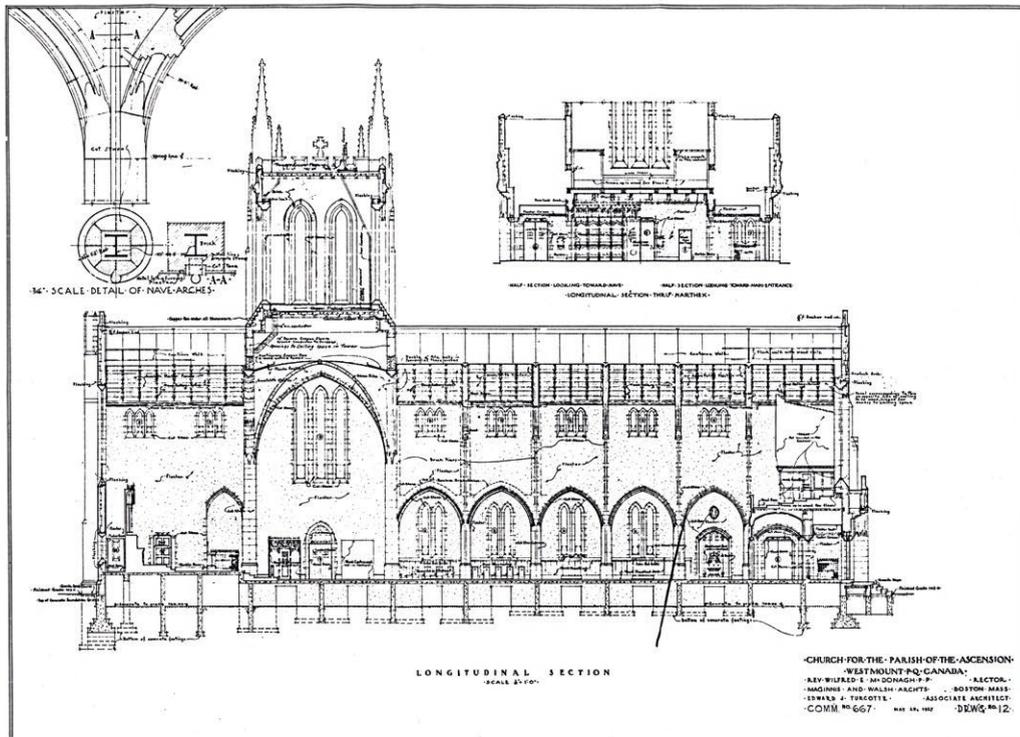


Time-Honoured but Time-Worn

Notwithstanding the steadfast efforts of parishioners to care for their church over the decades, Ascension of Our Lord is not immune to the toll of time and is now in need of repair, preservation and polish.

Masonry repair 1986 Réparation de la maçonnerie





Longitudinal profile 1927 Coupe longitudinale
(Westmount Archives Archives Westmount)



THE NEED FOR THE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

CHURCH TOWER REPAIR & REHABILITATION \$365,000

EXTERIOR & INTERIOR REFURBISHMENT \$325,000

Replacement of original tile flooring (\$75,000)

Refinishing the church pews (\$100,000)

Masonry repair and replacement (\$150,000)

REPAIR & RESTORATION OF CASAVANT ORGAN \$310,000

Blower and Bellows (\$60,000)

Console replacement (\$250,000)

TOTAL CAMPAIGN TARGET **\$1,000,000**





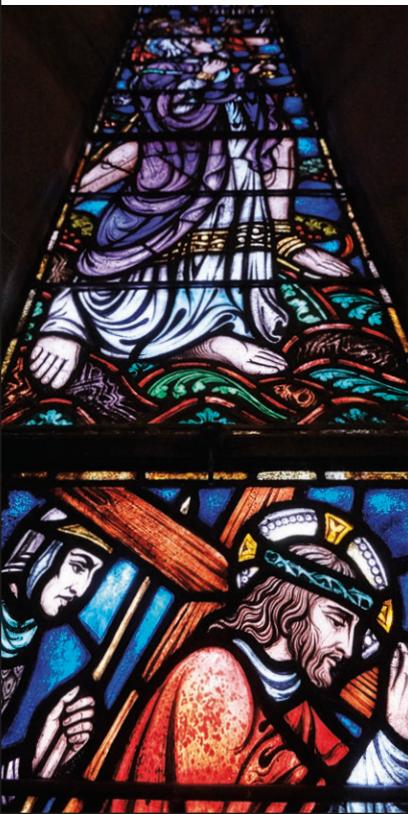
CHURCH TOWER REPAIR & REHABILITATION

The most important issue needing attention is the church tower. Subsequent to a comprehensive assessment conducted by an expert architectural firm specialized in religious heritage buildings, it has been confirmed that the tower's metal structure has rusted considerably as a result of persistent water infiltration through open masonry joints and a damaged sill.

This rusting has created a general bulging of the structure and led to the cracking of stones and opening of more joints. If not dealt with, the deterioration will accelerate and the condition of the tower will degenerate to the point of posing a genuine public security risk.

In light of the situation, the wardens filed an application for financial support with the Quebec Religious Heritage Council (QRHC) in June 2018. In recognition of the Ascension of Our Lord's religious value and historical and architectural significance, and of the parishioners' unparalleled devotion to maintaining their church over the years, **the QRHC awarded a grant in the amount of \$385,000 to support the \$750,000 cost to repair and refurbish the tower.** The grant is conditional on the work being carried out within two years.

**BALANCE REQUIRED FOR TOWER REPAIR
& REHABILITATION
\$365,000**



EXTERIOR & INTERIOR REFURBISHMENT

The toll of time and the elements is also clearly evident on the church's exterior façade and masonry. The mortar between sections of stone has deteriorated, and the joints must be repointed; exterior stonework showing minor cracking must be repaired, while stones in which larger cracks have formed need replacing.

The state of the church's magnificent **stained glass windows** has become compromised. Caulking has dried out or been worn away, and must be replaced. The church's **pews and the linoleum flooring** beneath them date back to Ascension of Our Lord's earliest beginnings and are both in need of restoration.

**EXTERIOR & INTERIOR REFURBISHMENT
\$325,000**

REPAIR & RESTORATION OF CASAVANT ORGAN

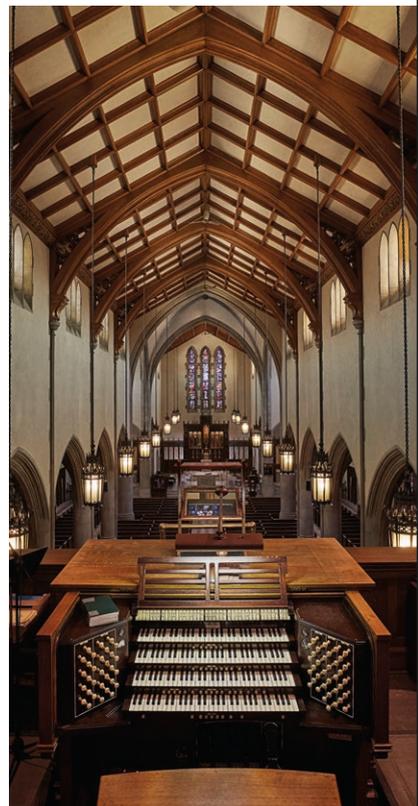
The Ascension of Our Lord has a rich music program that goes back to the founding of the parish. The church's superb Casavant Frères organ — one of the last instruments overviewed by the Casavant brothers themselves — is central to this tradition.

This magnificent instrument is a choral accompaniment without equal, serving as a unique and important gem within Montreal's thriving organ culture. Urgent care is required, however, in order to preserve and maximize its exceptional orchestral sound quality, musical range and expression.

The console, built in 1928, has reached the end of its lifecycle. Numerous contacts and components are worn beyond repair. Made in the early 20th century, the instrument's blower and bellows are now also at the end of their lifespan. Many parts of the instrument's interior require cleaning, replacement or repair, while the organ's pipes are in need of cleaning and revoicing to correct and stabilize their tune.

REPLACEMENT OF BELLOWS, BLOWER & CONSOLE
\$310,000

TOTAL CAMPAIGN TARGET
\$1,000,000



“Opus 1344 is one of a few Casavant (organs) of this period still in existence in the world, and is truly unique in Montreal. Such an instrument restored will be a great asset in the city...”

— Jacquelin Rochette,
Artistic Director, Casavant Frères





First Communion, c. 1930
La première communion



St. Leo's Hockey Team, c. 1949
L'équipe de hockey de St. Leo



Graduation 1944 Remise des diplômes
The Sisters of the Congregation of
Notre Dame taught at St. Paul's Academy.
Les Sœurs de la Congrégation de
Notre-Dame enseignèrent à
l'Académie St-Paul.

Since its cornerstone was laid in 1927, Ascension of Our Lord Church has stood as a cherished jewel in the crown of Westmount's English-speaking Catholic community, as in the broader community at large as well.

It has served as an enduring monument to the stability and consistent devotion of parishioners who first gave it life, and who have continued to support and nurture the church since the outset.

Today, in light of the various repairs, refurbishments and upgrades required, a significant investment is needed to ensure that our church can continue to serve parishioners in all its glory for years to come. The work to be carried out will allow us to update and add vibrancy to our facilities, to better cater to our entire community, and to assure that our parish remains a thriving place of worship, service, learning and fellowship for future generations.

In actual fact, Ascension of Our Lord is a mirror that reflects who we are. It is a vibrant manifestation of our deepest identity. Thus, by joining hands and hearts together to infuse new vitality into our church, we will be breathing new life into our entire faith community.

The challenge of preservation provides us all with a privileged opportunity to contribute to the legacy of our community and to pass our rich heritage on to future generations as it was bestowed upon us. I pray that, through our generous, collective support of our proposed capital campaign, our magnificent parish church will continue to stand for years to come as a glorious symbol of God's enduring love and presence among us.

— Father Lawrence MacEachen, Pastor
April 2019

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John Peacock

Pastor | Curé

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