

## HONOURING THE PAST... MOVING FORWARD INTO THE FUTURE

In late 1982, His Eminence Archbishop Sotirios (then Bishop), received a letter from a parishioner, the late Bertha Heliotis, stating her willingness to donate funds towards the establishment of a Greek Orthodox Church in the Barrie-Orillia area. His Eminence organized a meeting with the members of the Greek Canadian Northern Association, the Barrie District Greek Canadian Association as well as all of the Greek Orthodox families in the surrounding areas regarding the need to organize and establish a Greek Orthodox Church in the area somewhere central in Simcoe County.

After holding services at St. James Anglican Church in Orillia twice a month, the committee and Fr. Stavros Moschos began investigating sites to either build or rent a premise to conduct services. Eventually our present Church (St. James Crown Hill Anglican Church & Cemetery) was selected and the property secured at a reasonable rent. Though the location was ideal, 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 initial donation as a starting point, the church was on its way. Eventually the Church and Cemetery would be purchased and owned by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Canada.

In December of 1984 the inaugural service was conducted at our Church. Fr. Stavros would guide the Church for the next 10 years. Our following Priest, Fr. Konstantinos Tsagaris, led our Parish for a short time, until Fr. Joseph Friej was assigned to pastor our community until his death in 2006. Fr. Anatoliy Bandura was our next Priest who served for a few years and was followed by Fr. George Papazoglou, who served until 2016.

In November 2016, we received our current Parish Priest, Fr. Theodoros Alamanos, who, under his guidance, has encouraged us to embark on new journeys. From its humble beginnings with only 2 services a month, we are now at 2-3 services a week! With continued yearly renovation projects, the 200 year Church structure, has served as our home and continues to do so as our parish has slowly grown with both Greek and non-Greek individuals and families, seeking the Orthodox faith and learning to live it in its fullest!

