

PROPOSAL

TRINITY CENTRES
FOUNDATION

COMMUNITY HERITAGE
PILOT PROJECT



Prepared For :

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CHURCHES AS COMMUNITY HERITAGE

Churches are often considered examples of 'tangible heritage': imposing stone buildings that bear witness to the vibrancy of earlier Christian congregations. However, they are also sites of 'intangible heritage' or 'lived cultural practices': objects, practices, stories, and memories belonging to the communities that worship, meet, work, and connect in and around them. As the Trinity Centre Foundation works with churches to transform them into 'community hubs,' it is vital that these stories are not left behind. The proposed 'Community Heritage Project' will engage community stakeholders in gathering, recording, and making accessible the church's history. Using archival sources and oral history, the project will centre community members' narratives in generating a record of the church as *place* and *people*, to be archived for future consultation, published as a book, and celebrated in a public-facing event.

KEY OUTCOMES:

COMMUNITY MEMBER ENGAGEMENT IN SHAPING AND SHARING THE
CHURCH'S STORY
A RICHER UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHURCH'S HISTORIC AND CURRENT
ROLE IN ITS COMMUNITY

The Community Heritage Project will combine a survey of the church's archival materials (as well as relevant information in diocesan or municipal archives) with oral history collected from interviews with church members, organizations and community groups who use the space. Interview techniques will be tailored according to individual needs (group interview, virtual interview), with an emphasis placed on understanding the stories of the church in the context of the church building itself, through walking interviews and object and place-based discussions.

KEY DELIVERABLES:

- **A DIGITAL ARCHIVE/FINDING AID**
OF CHURCH HERITAGE MATERIALS LODGED IN MUNICIPAL ARCHIVES
- **A PUBLICATION**
TELLING THE STORY OF THE CHURCH
- **A 'BOOK LAUNCH' EVENT**
FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND THE PUBLIC

PILOT PROJECT: ST. JAMES/JAX MTL

St. James/Jax Church, at 1439 Saint-Catherine St W, Montreal, offers an ideal opportunity to implement this model as a pilot project, given TCF's continued work at this site, and my own involvement with the community. The chart below outlines a timeline and workflow for a Community Heritage Pilot Project at St. James/Jax.

Phase	Actions	Outcomes	Hours + Expenses
research and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -obtain and examine materials in church and local archives -collaborate with church leadership to create a list of interviewees -design interview methods according to group needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -research and interview plan established -organizations, groups and individual interviewees contacted 	32
explore financing options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -research and write grant applications to municipal and other funding bodies for project components 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -funding for costs associated with the project secured 	48
connect and collect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -continue research in church and municipal archives -conduct interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -archival information and stories collected from community and church records -report and publication begin to take shape 	160 (variable, depending on amount of materials in archive and number of interviewees)
assemble and share	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -write a report and assemble interview notes/recordings, list of materials available in church archive, and package in a digital format -write, edit, and design publication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -host community event/book launch -lodge research materials and book in library/archive 	104 book design/publication (cost variable) 'book launch' event (cost variable)
reflect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -reflect on this iteration of the project alongside church leadership and project participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -present a report and revised plan for further implementation 	16

TOTAL HOURS (MAY VARY): 360

WHERE NEXT?

A key role of the Community Heritage Pilot Project at St. James/Jax will be to establish the viability of the program, and compile a guide for future implementation at other TCF sites. I anticipate that implementing this first iteration of the program will lead to a greater understanding of community needs and the availability of archival materials, as well as location of municipal, provincial, and federal granting bodies. Best practices for interviews will also vary according to context (language, access, diversity of stakeholders). With this in mind, the report will frame the St. James/Jax Community Heritage Pilot Project as a first iteration of the program, with recommendations for alternate modes and methods to be implemented in different contexts.

WHY NOW?

In 2021, the National Churches Trust published a landmark report titled *The Future of the UK's Church Buildings*, highlighting the potential and challenges inherent in preserving the UK's churches in this time of uncertainty and change. Written by church leaders, creatives, politicians, and scholars, the report overwhelmingly draws on the rich variety of present experience and local memory embedded in these sites, proving their value in the past and present, and suggesting a multitude of future uses informed by each church's unique story. Understanding how past and present communities interact with, value and use church buildings can only strengthen TCF's partnerships and generate more creative ideas for developing the church building as a resource for both church and city.



The Future of the UK's Church Buildings. The National Churches Trust, 2021.

See: <https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/campaign/our-campaigns/future-uks-church-buildings>



ABOUT ME



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I am a soon-to-be 2022 graduate of Concordia University's Individualized Program, where I worked with faculty in Irish Studies, Art History, Design, and Art Education and made use of archival research and oral history interviews to chart lace design and making in Ireland from the late-nineteenth century to its current place as a living cultural heritage practice in Ireland today. I have taught undergraduate courses in nineteenth-century British print media and culture, and material culture, landscape and the built environment in Ireland. I have worked for several community organizations as a researcher and educator, including the Cataraqui Archaeological Research Foundation (Kingston), The Stephen Leacock Historic House (Orillia), and the In Other Words Art Program (L'Arche Belfast). A lifelong church member, I have also been involved with Christian communities in Orillia, Kingston, Montreal, and Belfast, Northern Ireland.