

Early Years

Augustine Church was founded in 1887. The cornerstone of the present church was laid in 1903 and the first worship service was held in 1904. Augustine United Church was born in 1925 when many Presbyterian churches across Canada, including Augustine, joined with Methodist, Congregationalist and Union Churches to form [The United Church of Canada](#).

From the days when everyone had a "Sunday-best" outfit, ladies wore hats to church, and our Sunday School had an enrollment of over 500 children, to the Covid years where we were able to take advantage of 21st century technology to meet by Zoom from our homes, Augustine has been a welcoming sanctuary for seekers and skeptics. We have met over the years in women's groups, men's groups, family groups, CGIT, boys' clubs, and many other groups for Bible study, fellowship, fundraising activities, and community service. We have invited others to be part of our community of faith, cared for each other as Christ cares for us, and served communities beyond our walls through the power of God's transforming love in human action

Justice and Community Service

Augustine has a long history of impacting the wider community. We have supported mission and service needs both locally and internationally through financial and volunteer assistance. Augustine volunteers served our Canadian soldiers in the two World Wars by sewing hospital gowns, shirts, and other much-needed items in the "Red Cross Room". During the 1950 Red River flood, we were the relief centre for the area, serving coffee and food to tired sandbaggers and providing food and shelter to refugees from flood areas. Beginning in the 1960's we have been part of the Ecumenical Ministry, with ministry existing in community service projects, including Fort Rouge Ecumenical Apartments for seniors and marginalized folk. In the 1960's a "feed-in" was organized to serve the large numbers of young people hitchhiking across Canada with few financial resources. Meals were served at Augustine every summer evening for 3 years. We have provided meeting space for Alcoholics Anonymous since the 1970's, and in 1981 the Oak Table began as a place where people could come in for a cup of coffee and conversation.

In 1995 Augustine became the first Affirming Congregation in The United Church of Canada, welcoming people of all sexual orientations as equal participants in all aspects

of life, work and worship. In association with [1JustCity Inc.](#), for five winters we have hosted the [Just a Warm Sleep Program](#), garnering us the respect of many other churches. Oak Table has grown in its scope and service since its inception. In 2021, Oak Table served over 31,000 meals, distributed almost 7,000 emergency good kits and was supported by over 11,000 volunteer hours. On any given day of its operation, you will find Augustinians in volunteer roles – living our faith in service to others.

We have always been a community that promotes justice by working alongside other organizations in our community. Our partners include [Amnesty International](#), [Grands'N'More Winnipeg](#), Kairos and the [Rainbow Resource Centre](#). We support our partner organizations through awareness activities, fundraising, and participation in walks, demonstrations (Pride Week, peace marches, climate change demonstrations), and other projects.

In the midst of all the good, we have struggled as well. In spite of financial difficulties, and uncertainty for the future, we have always overcome each difficulty through faith and dedication.

A New Chapter: Augustine Centre

Our elegant old stone church has been an important part of life in Osborne Village for more than 120 years, and its newly refurbished steeple can be seen throughout the neighbourhood.

Now a new era is beginning as our historic building is being transformed into the heartbeat of the Village with the establishment of [Augustine Centre](#). The congregation looks forward to continuing to live out our Mission, Vision and Values as we actively participate in the surrounding community.

In January 2022 our building's operation was entrusted to the Augustine Centre Board, consisting of other partners in the building, one AUC Trustee, and community members. Our partners include [Oak Table Inc.](#) and [SPLASH Child Care Inc.](#) For many of its 40 years, Oak Table was a project of Augustine United Church. Now it is part of [1JustCity](#), a United Church initiative. We watched with great interest as Oak Table created an amazing and well-thought out facility to serve its guests. The Pulford SPLASH Early learning Center (opened on March 1, 2022) is a 92-space facility for infants and pre-school children. SPLASH is known for its excellent curriculum, Forest School Program, and exceptional child care. Plans are underway to transform our sanctuary into a multi-

purpose space which, in addition to being a Worship space, will also be available as a practice or performance space for community arts groups and will constitute an essential part of the community hub model. The exterior of our building will be restored to continue its iconic presence in Osborne Village

People in the city are excited by what we are doing together. Many have said that this endeavour is a model for what many churches could do to remain vital and of service, and to ensure that their buildings do not simply become mausoleums for a life that once was. Since January, two other Winnipeg United Church congregations, and a United Church congregation in Ontario, have asked the Augustine Centre Board to provide advice and feedback to assist them as they design more varied uses of their own beloved buildings.

At this point, we as Augustinians can take a moment to focus with pride on the progress to date and the promise of this endeavour. Our mission of service to the community continues from the proud legacy of those who, in times of crisis, have offered Augustine as a community base of support and comfort. Going forward we are committed to being known in the community, not only for our historical recognition, but for our new programs and initiatives, involvement, connections, and resources.

As we look forward to a future unencumbered by the needs of an aging building, we are ready to explore and stretch our current understandings of what it is “to be the church” in order to best meet the needs and expectations of the ever-changing world around us. As members, we want to deepen our faith by becoming informed about, and responsive to, the concerns of our community, country, and the world. Ultimately we want to be change-making and focused outside ourselves in an inclusive and reconciling way that **is relevant, engaging, and meaningful.**