

# Help! I've never been to church before!

If you haven't been to a church before, it can be a rather **scary** prospect. We understand if you are hesitant at simply appearing on a Sunday morning. To make life a little easier, here are some ideas of what you can expect and what **WON'T** happen to you!

To get an idea of what St. Timothy's is like, you might want to go to our webpage at [www.sainttimothy.ca](http://www.sainttimothy.ca). You can also email us at [office@sainttimothy.ca](mailto:office@sainttimothy.ca) to ask a question or arrange a meeting with someone. This could be over coffee at a place of your choosing (you won't have to commit to showing up at a worship service!). Or phone our parish office at 604-299-6816 to speak in person with one of us.



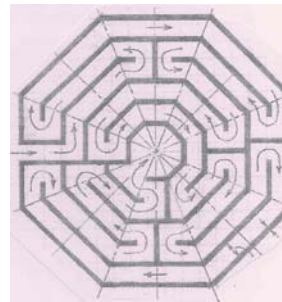
You might be talking to the parish office assistant, Yolanda, when you phone. You can ask to speak with our priest, Stephanie, or one of our lay (not ordained) leaders called wardens. If you have a special interest in an area – children, seniors, campus ministry, bible studies – we'll try and link you up with the right person.

Check out [this map](#) for directions to the church and transit information. St. Timothy's is only two blocks from the Brentwood Town Centre Skytrain station and the bus stop is right outside our door. We have a large parking lot right next to the building.



Our facility is completely accessible – so we can accommodate you if you come in a stroller, wheelchair, or walker. Assistance animals on a leash are very welcome in the building. All other animals are invited to our service for the Blessing of the Animals on October 4 each year – their special day to go to church and bring their human companions.

When you come up the covered walkway to the front doors, you will see our new Meditation Garden and labyrinth. These are open round the clock as an outside sacred space. Please feel free to drop by any time to walk the path and enjoy the quiet.



If you come on a Sunday, we have services at 10 am and 9 pm. Sunday mornings are when the faith community gathers for its main worship of the week. On Sunday evenings, the church is open from 8:30 pm for silent meditation, followed by a short contemplative night service.

As you come up to the main doors, you will be greeted by someone who can tell you where the washroom is and give you a Sunday leaflet. It's like a getting a programme at a concert; it gives you an idea of what will happen in the service that day.



We are a child-friendly community, and if you are bringing younger people, they will find some new friends here. Your children are welcome to stay with the adults upstairs in the worship service, or to join other young people downstairs for part of the time in age-appropriate KidsChurch programmes. The children rejoin the adults for the last part of the service. There are play mats and soft toys at the front sides of the worship area for toddlers, but you don't have to be a child to get down and play at St. Timothy's.

When you come into the worship area, you will notice that some people will kneel or sit in prayer while others will be chatting (quietly, we hope!) to their neighbours. This is the living room of the church, so make yourself at home. It is always good to give thanks for the good things in your life, and maybe take a minute to quiet your mind and be open to what God may say to your heart.

This would be a good time to put any electronic devices onto "prayer mode" by either silencing them or turning them off altogether. Don't you deserve a little quality time without the distractions of the rest of your week?

The worship books that we use at St. Timothy are in the rack in front of your seat. The words to most of the service are in the green Book of Alternative Services, and we will always tell you what page we are on! The songs are from the blue or bright green hymnbooks, although sometimes one or two will be reprinted in the leaflet.



Don't worry about getting lost as we go along. If you are not sure what to do, just follow everyone else. If there are explicit stage directions (e.g. "Please stand as you are able"), they will be given as we go. We do sing – so allow yourself to sing out if you want. Nobody is going to critique your vocal ability, and we all are "making a joyful noise to the Lord". And even if everyone else is doing something, don't join in if you don't feel comfortable. It's okay to stay seated and observe. Don't feel that you have to stay in one place, either. If your back tells you it's time to stand up and walk around quietly, do it. If your child (or you) needs to leave at any point for a bathroom break or a calm down, feel free.

Our Anglican pattern of worship is similar from week to week, and follows a tradition that dates from the time of the early followers of Jesus.

- We gather with a song and a prayer.
- There is a short children's talk.
- The children leave for their programmes as we sing a song of praise called the Gloria.

- We say together the Collect, a prayer for the week that many Christians worldwide are sharing on this day.
- There are Bible readings: one from the Hebrew Scriptures, a psalm, one from the New Testament, and a gospel reading about Jesus.
- There is a reflection offered by the priest on the Bible readings we heard.
- We have a time of quiet prayer, led by one of the people. On the fourth Sunday of the month, we have a special focus on prayers for healing.
- We collect an offering of money for the mission of God through the Church.
- We bless and share bread and wine with all baptized Christians.
- We give thanks and have a final song.

All baptized Christians, including children, are welcome to come forward to get a small piece of bread and a sip of wine in the sacrament called "communion" or "the Eucharist". In the prayer of blessing, we explain why we do this as followers of Jesus. Even if you were baptized as a baby, and haven't been back to Church for years, you can receive communion. Or if God is prompting you to come forward for a blessing prayer, you can indicate this to the priest. Not everyone present will eat and drink at this point, so don't feel embarrassed at all.



We do offer gluten-free bread for those with wheat intolerances.

If this is a first visit for you to St. Timothy's, please do not contribute to the offering plate. You are our guest and we are honoured that you are with us. Contributing to the work of the Church is the responsibility of Jesus' disciples. Many people in our community contribute through a bank deposit system, so you will see others who pass on the plate. If you decide that your time here has been a blessing to you and you come back, you can always make an offering in thanks.

After the morning service, we have a fellowship time downstairs with tea, coffee, juice, and snacks. Don't be afraid – we are friendly and we **WILL** let you go when you need to leave. There is no "sell job" that will happen. Meeting some individuals in the community and talking to them will give you a better idea as to what really goes on here in church! A helper will make sure that you get downstairs to the hall safely and operate the handicapped lift if you need it.

If you have any questions following your visit to St. Timothy's, don't be shy about contacting us. You may decide that this is the spiritual home for you, but be warned! There is no perfect Christian community – only God is perfect. You will find broken people here (maybe just like yourself), and people who come from very different backgrounds. That's part of the joy and pain of being in community. You may want to explore a couple of other faith centres to compare your experiences.

Remember, you are always welcome back!

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