

NEWS RELEASE

Parkdale United Church provides significant economic benefits to the community; study finds the congregation contributes nearly \$3 million

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A new study of the economic impact of Parkdale United Church finds that the congregation contributes services valued at more than \$2.97 million to the Hintonburg and surrounding community in Ottawa every year. These results come from a study of Parkdale United Church conducted by an organization called the Halo Project.

Dr. Wood Daly, Lead Researcher for the Halo Project, and instructor with the Toronto School of Theology at the University of Toronto, will be speaking at Parkdale United Church on Sunday, October 16, at 10:30 a.m. He will share his findings of the study and will speak generally on the economic relationship between local congregations and their surrounding communities.

"There is rapid intensification taking place in the Hintonburg neighbourhood and the surrounding Wellington West community which has benefits but is also concerning to those desirous of affordable housing in the area. Our church is working with local organizations and community groups to do what we can to support those in need. Our neighbourhood has a number of rooming houses, an emergency shelter and Ottawa social housing but unfortunately there is not enough for the needs of all the people in the area," said Rev. Dr. Bailey, Parkdale United Coordinating Minister. "I am very proud of the work that the members of our congregation have done, and continue to do, with local organizations to support people in our community."

The first study conducted by the Halo Project: "Valuing Toronto's Faith Congregations" is available at www.haloproject.ca. It was published in association with Cardus, an Ontario-based public policy think tank.

"The study clearly shows that faith-based groups generate substantial and measurable value for local neighbourhoods," said Mike Wood Daly. "While

the initial study looked only at congregations in Toronto, we are now seeing these findings are applicable to congregations in other areas of Ontario and Canada. It is incredible to see quantified, some of the significant and positive impact that individual congregations, such as Parkdale United Church, are having on the life and well-being of their communities in general and on the lives of individuals, families and groups in particular."

The research approach and methodology builds on work done by Dr. Ram Cnaan at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Social Policy in 2010 but adapts the methodology for the Canadian experience.

"Essentially the study asks: if a local congregation ceased to exist, what would it cost the municipality to replace the programs and services provided by the congregation to the wider community," Wood Daly said.

The study concludes that far from being a drain on local municipalities, faith-based congregations provide critical support for existing municipal investments and are an essential part of healthy, functioning communities.

At Parkdale United Church, the most significant outreach program the congregation sponsors is its In From the Cold supper hospitality ministry, which includes a 4-course meal, music, art, literacy support and literature distribution. These dinners are hosted at the church from November until March on Saturday afternoons. Over 80 volunteers work each Saturday to set up the hall, collect food stuffs, prepare meals, serve the meals, greet guests, provide music, tutor art and put together takeaway bags for more than 130 individuals in need during the cold winter months. To learn more about the In From the Cold program and to volunteer please visit:

<http://www.parkdaleunitedchurch.ca/ministries/InFromTheCold.htm>

Following the service this Sunday, Parkdale United Church is partnering with the Parkdale Food Centre, St. Luke's Table and the Dalhousie Food Cupboard to present the second annual "All About Food Community Walkathon" in support of the In From the Cold dinner program, as well as the work of the other three organizations. For more information and pledge forms visit:

<http://www.parkdaleunitedchurch.ca/NewsAndEvents/2016%20Pledge%20Sheet.pdf>

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