



The Cathedral Church of St. George

270 King St. E. at Johnson St.
P.O. Box 475, Kingston, Ont. K7L 4W5
Telephone: 613-548-4617
www.StGeorgesCathedral.ca

PRESS RELEASE NOVEMBER 12, 2025

St. George's Cathedral announces 'Lunch by George' program to relocate from church premises by June 30, 2026.

After 40 years serving Kingston residents experiencing food insecurity, St George's Cathedral has regretfully concluded that it no longer has the capacity to host the Lunch by George program from the church facility on Wellington Street. While the church provides kitchen and dining facilities, operation of the food program is managed by an independent non-profit organization, Outreach St George Kingston (OSGK), established in 1997. It is expected that OSGK will continue to offer this very valuable program from another location, and St George's has offered to assist them where possible in their relocation.

Background and context

Lunch by George was begun in 1985 by members of St George's Cathedral to provide meals through the summer months when the program provided by St Vincent de Paul was closed. Many people from St George's were crucial to launching and sustaining this program through the years, and the Cathedral owes a debt of thanks to all of them for their time, their financial resources, and their commitment.

But over the years, as the number of unhoused people included many more with mental health challenges and drug dependencies, the nature of the program changed to require much greater security. This situation also began to impact the operations of the church and, more critically, the staff of St George's.

The Executive of St George's has worked diligently and at great length with OSGK over the past three years to mitigate risks to those who use, and work from, the Cathedral. Weighing the fiduciary responsibility it holds for the safety of staff and visitors, the Executive of St George's has sadly concluded that the church's capacity for security can no longer meet the need presented by this program.

The Dean of the Cathedral, The Very Reverend Douglas Michael commented: "A 40 year ministry to the people of Kingston is definitely something to celebrate. But the significantly more complex requirements to host and run this kind of program now need a far more comprehensive and coordinated approach to food security, and we look forward to the partnerships we hope to explore."

Similarly the Bishop of the Diocese of Ontario, the Right Reverend William Cliff, stated: “I am profoundly grateful for the volunteers and church members who have served for nearly 40 years, caring for those in need on the streets of Kingston. I am deeply sorry that the costs of safety and supervision made this decision by the wardens necessary.”

This change does not mean that the people of St George's Cathedral are abandoning the hungry and unhoused in our community. Consultations with the Parish, the Diocese of Ontario, and other local, established organizations who serve this population are already underway to see what new possibilities for service may better match our capabilities.

[For further information, please contact: The Very Rev Douglas Michael
dmichael@stgeorgescathedral.ca
613-548-4617

- END -