

# Every day is a gift for popular priest

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Part time St. Mark's parish worker Teresa Kusatz said Tamas is unique because of his compassion and his ability to empathize with people.

"He really takes on their pain," said Kusatz, who plays the organ for the St. Mark's senior choir.

"He tends to be very generous to other people but scrimps on himself."

Renwick said that it is Tamas' inclination towards self-denial that led the congregation to buy him a new car.

"Ninety-five per cent of the time he gets in his car it's for us. And he doesn't spend much on himself."

He noted that the pastor's limited income would make it difficult for him to replace his current car, a 1985 model, which

was given to him by his previous congregation in Bolton to mark his 25th anniversary as a priest.

"That will be nice for sure. I won't have to worry about whether it's going to make it or not when I go out."

Tamas is somewhat shy when it comes to discussing the upcoming celebration. But Kusatz said he's excited about it.

"I think he's looking forward to it. All his friends from the past 40 years will be there."

Tamas' pilgrimage to the priesthood began when he studied philosophy for three years in a Hungarian seminary in the early '50s.

But he abandoned his studies and went to work as a labourer when the Soviet Union stepped up its program of religious persecution. He fled to Austria during the Hungarian uprising in 1956 and then migrated to Canada the following year at the age of 22.

"There was no chance for me to become a priest in Hungary," Tamas said. "The Russians closed 12 of the 15 seminaries. They wouldn't tolerate priests."

*"I used to know all the parishioners by their first names. Now that's not always possible. But I get to know them all eventually."*

With the help of the Jesuit Order, Tamas enrolled in St. Augustine's Seminary in Scarborough. He was ordained in May 1960 and went on to serve at four Toronto churches before going to Bolton to build St. Patrick's Cathedral in 1978.

Since coming to Stouffville, St. Mark's has experienced growth that has seen the church population increase to 950 families.

"I'm very pleased. There's been tremendous growth," Tamas says.

But the growth hasn't been without its challenges. "I used to know all the parishioners by their first names. Now that's not always possible. But I get to know them all eventually."

Tamas says mass three times each weekend with an average of 1,200 people attending in total.

He also says mass Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings. His duties include baptisms, weddings, funerals, counseling and visitations and he sits on nine church committees.

"The job has a lot of faces. It keeps you challenged," he says of his workload. His only assistance comes when a recently retired priest and former seminary classmate began helping him out two weekends a month.

But Tamas isn't wiling with the load. "I still find the challenge fascinating. I never get fed up with it. And there's always something different."

The job has plenty of satisfactions, Tamas says. "When I see the rewards, when something goes well, it makes it all worth while. If it was all funerals, it would get you down."

*"Our tables may be loaded here in Canada but we should remember that the whole world has the right to eat as well as we do."*

Tamas sees today's world as being marked by both advances and setbacks. He feels remarkable technological advancements have been offset by a tendency toward self-centredness. This has led some people to distance themselves from those who are in need throughout the world.

"We must remember we are our brother's keeper. Our tables may be loaded here in Canada but we should remember that the whole world has the right to eat as well as we do."

But he says optimism is preferable to pessimism.

"I still find that people are basically good. Most of them are doing their best. I like to work with people who are positive. I believe that ultimately goodness will triumph."

Tamas suggests the key to successful living lies in how people treat their neighbours, both locally and globally. "We must respect, love, trust and help one another."

Despite the scandals faced by the Catholic Church in recent years, Tamas feels the church still has a role to play in society.

"It's always easier to curse the darkness than to light a candle. The church will survive. We are God's instrument, even though we are an imperfect instrument."

Tamas meets with his fellow pastors as part of the Stouffville Ministerial Association whenever time permits. He feels the churches can work together to promote a common theme.

"All churches have a basic message of goodness and caring."

He maintains the churches will always be relevant as individuals work through the issue of spirituality.

"We all search for meaning in our existence. Life is more than eating and sleeping."

At the age of 66, Tamas isn't ready to slow down. He plans to continue his life's work on an indefinite basis.

"I never think about retiring. I see every day as a gift and I



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**Parkview Village**  
12184 Ninth Line South  
Stouffville

**Sunday, April 30, 2000**

**Ontario Presbyterian Chorus**  
7:00 p.m. Auditorium

**STOUFFVILLE UNITED CHURCH**  
34 Church St. N. 640-1163  
Worship Minister: Rev. Robert Nightingale  
Education Minister: Nancy Montelth  
**Sunday, April 30th, 2000**

10:30 am Worship Service - Camp Sunday  
Baby Fold, Children's Worship & Youth Pack

*Everyone Welcome*

**VIVIAN BAPTIST CHURCH**  
473-3543

**On Hwy. 48 at Vivian Rd.**  
Pastor Robert Okum

**Holding forth the doctrines of grace**

9:45 a.m. - Sunday School  
11:00 a.m. - Morning Worship  
7:00 p.m. - Evening Service


*Everyone is Welcome*

**STOUFFVILLE PENTECOSTAL CHURCH**

6853 Main St., Stouffville 640-5696

**SUNDAY, APRIL 30th, 2000**

9:30 & 11:00 a.m. - Friendship Service - Dealing with Anger  
6:00 p.m. - Youth Focus - Band "Hearts of Fire"



**Springvale Baptist Church**  
Stouffville Rd. at Kennedy Rd.  
887-5651

Senior Pastor: Bob Fleming  
Associate Pastor: Bill Thornton  
Associate Pastor: Brian G. Simcoe  
Student Ministries: Heather Thornton  
Worship & Music Co-ordinator: Sharon Russell  
Children's Ministries Co-ordinator:

**April 30th, 2000**

9:45 a.m. Adult Bible Class  
Celebration Series

9:45 a.m. & 11:00 a.m. Message Series  
"I Peter - God's Survival Manual"  
Pastor - Bob Fleming

6:00 p.m. - FEB Central Church  
Planting Presentation  
Guest Speaker: Paul Percy

Wednesday - 7 p.m. Kids Program

For more info call Church Office

**BLOOMINGTON GOSPEL CHURCH**  
13660 Ninth Line  
(South of 47 Highway formerly Bloomington Rd.)  
Pastor - Dr. John Howarth

**Sunday, April 30th, 2000**

11:00 a.m. - Worship  
"Asking For Our Daily Bread"  
Mathew 6:11

6:30 p.m. - Evening Service

*Everyone Welcome*

**Wideman Mennonite Church**

Welcome to Worship Hour - 11:00 a.m.  
Christian education for all ages - 9:45 a.m.  
Pastor - Ken Wellington

1 km. North of Major Mackenzie on Hwy. 48  
Church Office: 640-6219 For a ride call: 640-4185

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The Rev. Phil Cooper

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**Sunday, April 30th, 2000**  
Second Sunday of Easter

8:00 a.m. Holy Communion  
10:00 a.m. Choral Eucharist  
with Baptism Church School  
and Nursery provided.

**Wednesday, May 3rd, 2000**  
10:00 a.m. Senior's Service and Tea

*Everyone Welcome!*

Welcome to:

**ST. JAMES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**Sunday, April 30, 2000**

Church School 9:45 a.m.  
Worship 11:00 a.m.

**Friday, May 5, 2000**

30th Annual Sacred Music Night  
8:00 p.m.

A friendly welcome awaits you.

6432 Main St. 640-3151  
stjames.stouffville@sympatico.ca

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**SUNDAY SERVICES**  
Discovery Service: 9:30 am  
Christian Education for all ages  
Celebration Service: 11:00 am

Watch our sign  
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in a Changing World"*

**STOUFFVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH**  
A Fellowship Church  
6273 Main Street  
Pastor: Gordon M. MacCormack 905-640-2911

**Sunday, April 30th, 2000**  
- Everybody Welcome -  
10:00 a.m. - Sunday School  
11:00 a.m. - Worship Service  
Message: "Satisfaction Guaranteed"  
Music: Pastor Gord  
Join us for Prayer - Wed. 7:30 p.m.  
Advanced Announcement  
May 14th, 2000  
Mother's Day & Our 127th Anniversary  
with Don & Shirley Hamilton from  
North Star Ministries - Manitoulin Island  
"Something Special for every lady"  
- God Bless - We Care -

Come  
to  
Church  
on  
Sunday