

CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY PRESERVING OUR LEGACY



MAY HILARY LEWIS

Poster developed by: Moveta Nanton ©2024.
Black History Month at The Church of
St. Peter and St. Simon-the-Apostle.

I have been a parishioner of St. Simon-the-Apostle before the amalgamation with St. Peter for a total of 46 years.

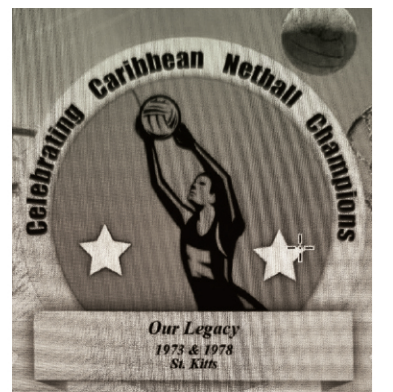
I currently volunteer as a member of the Alter Guild and have been one of the main supporters of the Caribbean Night Events for several years, planning the menu and working as the chef for the dinner for the this event.

In the community I have acted as a volunteer chair for the St. Kitts Social Committee for the past 23 years and have raised over \$96,000 for the organization.

In the past, my volunteer activities included St. Simon-the-Apostle's Shelter, a choir member at St. George's Anglican Church, St. Kitts and a member of the Anglican Young People's Association (AYPA). I very much enjoy helping others.

Many may not know that I have also played on the St. Kitts Netball team representing St. Kitts throughout the Caribbean.

I have been playing netball from the age of 16 and being the shortest person on the team was given the nickname "Tiny".



The St. Kitts netball team played against most of the other Caribbean countries and as a result I was able to travel to most of these islands. My team won the Caribbean championship in 1973 and as Team Captain I proudly brought home the trophy.

Last year, Marcella Liburd, Governor General of St. Kitts and Nevis honoured myself and other 1973 and 1978 champion players with a celebration in St. Kitts. The celebration was called "73 and 78 Caribbean Netball Champions' Fun Day".

I also played with the Renown Netball Club here in Toronto. The Renown Netball members celebrated our 50th Anniversary on November 7, 2023 with a dinner and dance, the venue of which was our church hall.

I love attending church. I grew up with a family of 11 siblings and attending church has always been a part of my life. It has instilled the life of Christ as a way to help others.



AUDREY HUGHES

My name is Audrey Hughes. I was a member of St. Peters' Anglican Church and I'm presently a member of the Church of St. Peter and St. Simon-the-Apostle's congregation. I immigrated from the island of Barbados to reside in Toronto, Canada where I initially settled in the St. James Town community during the mid 1970's.

As a regular churchgoer, I made the decision to visit the churches in the area until I found a church where I would enjoy the worship, the music, the sermons, and the fellowship. One Sunday, I decided to give myself ample time to walk. It is a quaint looking church at the corner of Carlton and Bleeker streets in the early 80s. I was very impressed by the warm reception of the priest and members of the congregation, and St. Peter became the home church for my children, and myself. Soon after I became involved in the church, and ended up wearing many hats.

First, I became a Sunday school teacher, then the Sunday School Superintendent, and held this position for many years. I often organized our rally days for Sunday schools of other churches of various denominations in the community. I organized the Congregation Sunday School picnic every summer, usually held in Allen Gardens.

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I was nominated to be the Peoples' Warden, and I held this position for seven years. Following this, the priest in charge asked me to be the Rectors' Warden which I graciously accepted and served in the position for eight years. I truly enjoyed serving in both positions.

Then I was the coordinator of the Pastoral Care Group, which was comprised of 15 members who visited nursing homes, hospitals, and made phone calls to absentees and "shut-in" members of the congregation, to support their ongoing connection with the church. Served on the committee that was responsible for the merger of Saint Peters and Saint Simon.

I was also a member of the Altar Guild, Advisory Boards, Garden Committee, Nomination & Selection Committee. In addition, I served as chalice bearer, a reader, prayed with our priest once a month or at the altar with individual members of the congregation depending on their needs.

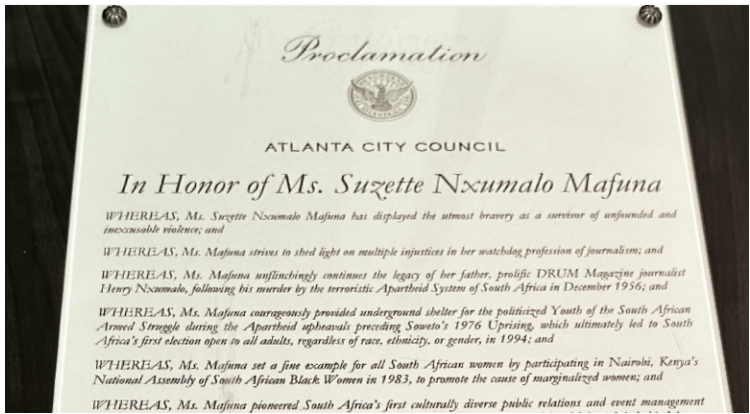
In addition, I organized Caribbean luncheons and evenings with other members, where we invited our friends and family from other churches. I also formed the Caribbean-Afro Choir, which would sing at special events and do gospel music during Black History Month. We would often invite artists from the Caribbean community to perform at such events.

Outside of church I volunteered at the Elizabeth Fry Society Toronto, where I served as an intake worker for women at Metro Detention Center once every two weeks. I also volunteered for Big Sister organization where I was paired up to mentor young girls who lived in my community.

The merger of St. Peter with St. Simon was difficult for me, but the heartfelt welcome by St. Simon's congregation helped me greatly.

While I don't have the energy as I did when I was younger to keep up with all my past roles, I currently help with the chalice and anointing at Sunday services, and occasionally with the Sunday school when help is required.

St. Peter and St. Simon-the-Apostle has come to offer me the things I loved at St. Peters. I'm glad to be here and I really enjoy the worship, wonderful music, the meaningful sermons and the fellowship with our pleasant members.



SUZETTE LUCILLE MAFUNA

As a baby, I was christened at the only local Anglican church, Holy Cross in a segregated black township known as Orlando West – home also to former President Mandela and Arch Bishop Mphahlele. I then attended an Anglican Kindergarten named Lesedi - meaning light in the same vicinity. Much later, this Parish would also bury both my parents.

When I got old enough to apply for an ID document, my baptismal certificate came in handy since the apartheid law ruled against the registration of newly born black babies. It's the Anglican baptism certificate which opened doors for me that would otherwise have been unattainable – from a vaccination certificate which was a prerequisite for registration to elementary school, to the acquisition of an identity document, a travelling document for travel within Southern African states, a civil marriage registration and even to enabling me to attain a South African passport for international travel.

The Anglican Church is the only place of worship I have an affinity with, which is welcoming and where I've always felt most comfortable and accepted. My close association with the Anglican church is the reason I decided, on arrival in Canada, to find accommodation close to any Anglican Church. As if by a miracle I was to find an apartment a mere five-minute walk away from a quaint little Anglican parish, St Peter's, where I began to worship and contribute to the Parish Newsletter which would later become the much larger and professionally produced JUBILATE.

By then, I had already subscribed to volunteering for several community structures and organizations, beginning with the AIDS Committee of Toronto. This was a deliberate move as an immigrant from South Africa where the mere mention of the word AIDS was taboo and therefore dismissed as a foreign white people's disease. As a result, thousands of AIDS-affected South Africans, particularly black people, were dying like flies leaving scores of parentless children in the care of frail and ageing grandparents. I realized I could do for the people of my new home, Canada, what I couldn't do for my own people through lending my skills, time and energy to Toronto's AIDS communities.

Starting out as an assistant to the organization's head Librarian – registering new library clients, helping with their book selections and guiding them, I graduated to monitoring client use of

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library services to ensure books were well-handled, returned timeously and following up on delayed book returns. I also assisted with filing the books as instructed by the head Librarian. On alternative days I assisted at ACT's furniture bank where I helped new clients access used furniture and clothing as well as arranged, in consultation with clients, for delivery of selected items to clients' new homes.

Annually, I participated in the PRIDE PARADE and joined the Green Squad for cleaning and picking up through the city streets following the AIDS WALK, Bike Rally and the commemorative AIDS Prayer Vigil. Through contact with African immigrants, I volunteered to write for a local business newspaper, THE CONNECTION which was distributed freely to informal and professional entrepreneurs from the diaspora.

The ease with which I took on volunteer work is because of my childhood experience with what back in my South African hometown was known as community work where neighbourhood community leaders would round us up as teenagers to help the elderly with their shopping, household chores or accompany them to the local clinic, to weekly prayer meetings or to pension collection points. It is such childhood community



activism which helped keep us off the crime and drug-infested township streets and prepared us for humanitarian work in our adult lives. One of the highlights as a community activist was an invitation to join prominent female entrepreneur and humanitarian Mrs. Marina Maponya's charity organization which helped raise funds for children with physical and mental disabilities.

Later, in my forties, as an established social justice activist I would travel to Nairobi as a participant in the 1985 International Women's Third Conference which was hosted by Nairobi, in Kenya. This conference not only closed the "Decade of Women," but set a series of member state schedules for the removal of legislated gender discrimination in national laws by the year 2000.

Volunteering for my Parish feels like the greatest gift I can give to my fellow sisters and brothers in Christ, my community, my adopted country and the Lord without whose mercy and Grace would not have been possible.