

Epic reading ...

The Gospel of Mark

Palm Sunday
March 29 at 7:00 p.m.

Christ's Church Cathedral
 252 James Street North
 Hamilton

Anyone interested in being a part of the telling should contact Co-ordinator Susan Wilson at rev.susan.wilson@gmail.com

Complete your [Spend Lent With Mark](#) by attending ... as you journey through Holy Week, Good Friday and Easter.

Celebrating a life well loved



Gloria and Bob Gardner celebrate by cutting his birthday cake.

Photo: Tamora Ferguson

DIANA COEN

On Sunday, Nov 30, 2014, St. Simon's Oakville celebrated the 90th birthday of one of our most beloved parishioners and priests: the Reverend Robert Gardner - or as we affectionately call him, "Father Bob". It was no surprise the event was "sold out". This is a testament to the great love and regard we have for Father Bob. As each speaker reflected on his life, his great legacy of love, family and parish community

became clear.

Darren Hogarth spoke about Father Bob's heritage as a fellow Jamaican. He was born and raised in Jamaica, made a Deacon in October 1948 and ordained Priest in June 1949 at the Cathedral Church of St. Jago de la Vega in Spanish Town. Although being in Canada since 1953, first serving in Montreal and later Ontario, he has maintained a deep love for and loyalty to his home country. True to his sense of community, he opened

his arms to fellow islanders in Oakville, and inspired the growth of our Caribbean Group. Our annual summer-time Caribbean Night and Caribbean Christmas potluck dinners are times of great fun and fellowship, and a testament to the importance of diversity in our community. Darren reminded us how Father Bob is always warm and welcoming, not only to fellow Jamaicans, but to everyone in his church family.

Other speakers, including Marie Decker and Jack Smye, highlighted the various ways Father Bob has woven himself into the vibrant St. Simon's tapestry. He remains at the heart of our Order of St. Luke community, which promotes healing by prayer, love, faith, anointing with oil and laying on of hands. Marie reminded us of his more jovial side. Behind his reserved and serene persona lies a fun-loving personality with a dry wit, who made us chuckle as he impersonated cowboys and other characters at past Cabaret shows. In recent years, Bob fulfilled his dream of joining the choir, where he sings alongside his friends and wife Gloria.

Peter, Bob and Gloria's son, shared stories of their family's journey from Montreal to different communities where Father Bob served in Ontario, such as St. James' Guelph, St. Philip-by-the-Lake Grimsby, St. John the Divine Cayuga, St. John's York and finally as Interim Priest and Honorary Assistant at St. Simon's Oakville.

Our celebration closed with reflections from Father Bob. He emphasized his deep love for both his immediate and church family. He shared his passion for his homeland and his fierce loyalty to both Jamaica and Canada. In reflecting on his profound and abiding faith, he demonstrated what we strive to be at St. Simon's: caring people, committed to building community, growing with God and serving the world through Christ's example.

We are blessed to have Bob and Gloria in our family, and are grateful to have celebrated this great occasion with them.

Diana Coen is Chair of Communications Cluster at St. Simon's Oakville