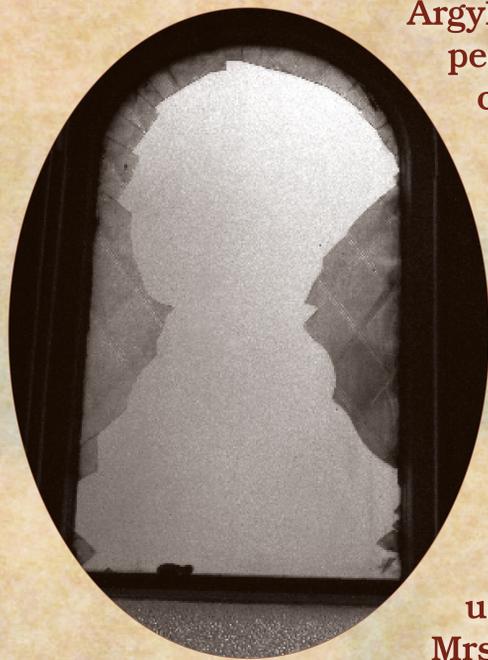


St. Paul's Response to the Halifax Explosion

*St. Paul's and
the Great War
"The Halifax
Explosion"*



"Help is Available Here"



Two reminders of the Explosion in the church are the west gallery window, shattered in the shape of a man's profile, it is said to resemble the Rev. Jean Baptiste-Moreau, an assistant at St. Paul's from 1750 - 1753, and a piece of window frame embedded above the War Memorial Arch in the entrance area (Narthex).

The Red Cross flag hanging outside the doors of the Parish Hall on Argyle Street announced: Help is Available Here. Injured, grieving people sheltered inside the church while the Parish Hall received cots, bedding, medical supplies, clothing, food, and a large stove. Doctors and nurses arrived to staff St. Paul's Emergency Hospital. A hundred parishioners volunteered to assist in the hospital and in district visiting, discovering the needs of families unable to leave their ruined houses. A message centre helped anxious relatives locate missing family. Over 350 homeless were cared for in the Parish Hall overnight during the first month, and more people found shelter from that night's blizzard in the Mission Hall on Albemarle Street.

The new stove not only gave welcome heat in a building which had, before the Explosion, a large skylight in its roof, it provided until the end of February 1918 thousands of meals prepared by Mrs. Elinor Armitage and her team of parishioner/cooks.

St. Paul's was the only church in the affected area able to hold services on the Sunday following the disaster. St. George's, St. Mark's, St. Matthias', Trinity and All Saints Cathedral congregations came to worship here while their damaged churches were repaired.

Archdeacon Armitage noted in his Service Register: "The Funerals in connection with all the Protestant churches in Halifax were held in St. Paul's for many days after the Explosion by Ministers of all denominations." He officiated at 24 funerals in the first week, and as remains were found and identified, more funerals followed in the winter of 1918.

It is difficult to know the effect of the Explosion on the oldest building in Halifax. Two stained glass windows on the main level were destroyed, and windows in the Gallery. Memorials on the walls crashed to the floor, doors were blown off their hinges, and one source states there was a wide crack in the roof. Unfortunately the "reconstruction" files on the church were discarded by the Halifax Relief Commission in 1972. An assessor who came to survey the church in 1918 remarked that he had never ever viewed a structure so strongly built. Thanks to those carpenters of the summer of 1750!

HALIFAX
EXPLOSION

100