

Bloor Street

We acknowledge that we are in the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit, the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee and the Huron-Wendat, on whose land we gather to talk, listen, learn, worship and heal together in the name of our Creator, the Holy One of Blessing.

Psalm 24:1 “The earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.”

People have lived in Toronto for thousands of years; the Indigenous peoples called it “The Carrying Place” because the Humber River provided a link between Lake Ontario, Lake Simcoe and the upper lakes. The first European explorers arrived circa 1615, led by Etienne Brule.

Modern Toronto has grown rapidly from the 1793 settlement established by John Graves Simcoe, Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada. The city continues to change around us, constantly reinventing itself with new buildings and a diverse population. Some things remain constant: we all have access to nature through the magnificent ravines that reach into the heart of the city.

St. Paul’s has ministered to our city for 175 years. This series of walks introduces us to our neighbours in prayer, celebrating Toronto’s vitality, growth, the beauty of our natural setting and hope for the future.

Bloor Street: our neighbours in business and commerce and culture

- **Bloor Street** is named after Joseph Bloor, innkeeper and brewer – his brewery was built at the corner of Sherbourne St, the site of the subway entrance today. Breweries were plentiful in the 19th century: the water wasn’t always safe to drink, until water filtration plants were built in the latter the 1800’s. Today’s micro breweries are following one of Toronto’s earliest business trends.
- **Route: turn right to the corner of Ted Rogers Way, cross to the north side.** For safety’s sake use the traffic lights – as St. Paul’s former, much loved Rector Bob Dann quipped: “There’s two kinds of jaywalkers on Bloor Street, the quick and the dead!”
- **Bloor Street East** became the home of several major life insurance companies in the mid-20th century; we are standing in front of the Manulife complex of buildings. They are good friends to St. Paul’s, allowing us free parking on Sundays and, while our Nehemiah Project renovation was underway, provided their staff cafeteria as venue for our annual Christmas Day lunch. *Prayer for our good friends at Manulife, their hospitality and generosity.* **Acts 18:26** “He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.”
- Across the street on the south-east corner Rogers Communications occupies the former home of Confederation Life, which went out of business in 1994, shortly after building a flamboyant, gothic-inspired extension. Rogers has grown from cable TV into a media giant, controlling print media, cell phones and television. *Let us pray for the many people affected by the changing ways we receive information and entertainment – jobs have been lost, others created.* **Isaiah 40:8** “The flower fadeth and the grass withers but the word of the Lord endureth for ever.”
- **Walk west to Church Street:** Crown Life insurance is located on the north-west corner. The newer glass clad building on the north-east corner is home to the Unilever Canada head office.
- The corner of Church and Bloor is a hub of media and advertising agencies in 160 Bloor East, and in the office complex on the south-west corner; Corus Entertainment has a division in the building on the south west side.
- **Continuing to the next block** we pass the concrete fortress of Marriott Hotel and the Hudson’s Bay Centre, a clumsy legacy of 1970’s brutalist architecture. This giant building shows a cold shoulder at street level – *Let us pray for better design standards in our city!* **Ezekiel 43:10-11** “Son of man, describe the temple to the people of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their sins. Let them consider its perfection, and if they are ashamed of

all they have done, make known to them the design of the temple—its arrangement, its exits and entrances—its whole design and all its regulations and laws. Write these down before them so that they may be faithful to its design and follow all its regulations.”

- **At Yonge Street** we have two tall(ish) office buildings facing each other on the east and west corners. Both are linked to the underground shopping concourse linking the Hudson’s Bay Centre all the way to Bay St. The buildings on the north side dominated this corner for years, recently surpassed by the 76-storey One Bloor condo tower across the street – with an 80-story condo soon to be build across from it. *Given that many condo dwellers live far above the ground, let us reflect on the tower of Babel pray for those living “in the clouds”,* **Genesis 11:4** “Then they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth.”
- Continuing west brings us to Mink Mile, ranked the 20th most expensive shopping street by New York real estate company Cushman & Wakefield, Bloor Street has evolved to acquire the stylish reputation as the brand name flagships found along it, including Canada’s Holt Renfrew.
- **At the corner of Avenue Road** we reach the Church of the Redeemer, a church planted from St. Paul’s Bloor Street in 1871. This Gothic revival church was completed in 1879, the parish grew so quickly, that it established a mission of its own in 1885, the Church of the Messiah at Avenue Road and Davenport. *Let us pray for our sister churches and the entire Anglican Communion* **Revelation 1:20** “The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels^[a]of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.”
- Across Bloor we see the Royal Ontario Museum with its modern crystal extension and the neoclassical Lillian Massey Building, originally home to the U of T’s Household Science program. Today it houses the Department of Classics– and the Club Monaco flagship store on Bloor St.
- Walking east on the south side of Bloor we pass The Colonnade, a Toronto landmark since 1963, an iconic expression of Yorkville’s transformation from counter-cultural village to chic and urbane neighbourhood. The Colonnade was one of the earliest, if not the first, mixed-use developments in Canada, combining retail at street level with office space on the lower floors and rental apartments above.
- The office building at the corner of Bloor West and Thomas St houses several Ontario government offices, as does 77 Bloor Street West at the corner of Bay Street. *Let us pray for government workers.* **Colossians 4:1** “Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven,” and **Colossians 3:23** “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.”
- The Manulife Centre anchors the south west corner of Bloor and Bay, with Bank of Montreal offices in the office tower with retail at street level and a high-rise luxury apartment building.
- Continue east past Yonge to St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, *Let us pray for this neighbour church.* **Galatians 3:28** “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” **Back to St. Paul’s. Duration 30 minutes.**