

People on the margins in our changing neighbourhood

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.

Psalms 24:1 "The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it."

This walk shows the effects of gentrification on the poor living among us.

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.

- **Turn left from St. Paul's, walk to Church Street, cross the street and turn left.**
- **Stop at 650 Church Street**, the Salvation Army Toronto Grace Health Centre, a 119-bed hospital that welcomes patients of all religious and ethnic backgrounds, and provides medically complex and specialized care and services such as Complex Continuing Care, Rehabilitation and Palliative Care. The Grace provides care to those most in need; those who are marginalized, without family or support; and in need of the unique care they offer. This building is currently under renovation and will soon reopen. Patients are being treated at a temporary location at Hillcrest. *Prayer for the compassion of the Salvation Army and the Grace Hospital, and their work with the "least of our brothers and sisters,* **Matthew 25:40** "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'
- **Walk south to Charles Street**, cross to south side and walk west, past new condos, to Sanctuary at 25 Charles St. E. This Christian charitable organization reaches out this downtown neighbourhood offering dignity, support and direction to people who want to reclaim healthy, meaningful lives. Outreach includes food, clothing, medical care, counselling and drug rehabilitation. *Prayer for Sanctuary, for the homeless,* **Matthew 8:20** Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."
Let us pray for those who carry a heavy burden, Matthew 11:28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."
and that we may all be committed to correcting injustice, Micah 6:8 "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."
- **Turn left into park beside Sanctuary.** Have you ever walked through this park system parallel to Yonge Street? It's here because the subway runs directly underneath!
- The large building on our left at Isabella Street houses the Children's Aid Society. *Prayers for the work of the Children's Aid Society, especially for children who have suffered abuse,* **Ephesians 6:4** "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord." *and asking that all followers of Jesus may share his compassion for children,*

Matthew 19:14 "Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.'"

- **Turn right on Isabella Street, walk to Yonge Street, turn left.**

How many payday loan storefronts can you count along this stretch of Yonge? Among the other businesses you can see include low-cost cell phone services –this connection to the world gives low-income people a semblance of stability through difficult times. There are several Nail studios: this kind of business can be practiced by immigrant women even if their facility with English is limited. Many entrepreneurial women support their families this way. *Prayer for the struggling poor, who have a special place in God's heart, Luke 6:20* "Looking at his disciples, he said: 'Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.'" **1 Timothy 5:18** "For Scripture says, 'Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain,' and 'The worker deserves his wages.'"

- A forest of new condos and cranes looms above these hardscrabble businesses – the face of Yonge Street is changing, fast. As we continue south to Gloucester Street we see the street level facades on the west side restored to their 19th-century glory. On the east side excavation has begun for another giant condo tower.

Let us pray for excellence in engineering, for safety and security on the site and that the Lord may be honoured among the construction crew, Psalms 127:1 "Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain."

- **Rounding the corner at Wellesley Street** we head east, past the subway station. The Orthopaedic and Arthritic Hospital is across the street, specializing in hip and knee replacement surgery. *Pray for the good work they do for so many people.*
- Walk east to Church Street, a main corner of Toronto's Gay Village. This area grew up during they years when LGBT people were marginalized, it is now a vibrant neighbourhood and tourist attraction. In many countries being LGBT is punishable by death. *Let us pray for the refugees from Ghana and other parts of Africa who risked death from the cold last winter to live in our fair and just country and our sanctuary city, welcoming the persecuted: Hebrews 6:18* "we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged."
- **Turn left and walk up Church Street to Bloor and St. Paul's. Duration 45 minutes**