

## St. James Town

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.

**St. James Town – the most densely populated high-rise community in Canada.**

**Route: Walk east along Bloor to Huntley Street, turn right one block to Selby Street, turn left, crossing Sherbourne St at the light, continue east on Howard St two blocks to Ontario St (opposite Church of St. Peter and St. Simon), continue south on Ontario Street to St. James Ave, turn right and walk west to Sherbourne. Turn right, continue north to Bloor, then east back to St. Paul’s.**

- Toronto’s history as a vertical city packed with residential towers began with St. James Town. Our first high rise neighbourhood resulted from the 1950’s urban renewal wave that swept through large cities across North America. City building was seen as a key to post-depression, post-war, nation’s recovery.
- The 19<sup>th</sup> Century St. James Ward was largely demolished to make way for 23 high rise buildings. The original buildings along Selby Street and Howard Street show us what the old Ward looked like.
- The community today is bordered by Sherbourne Street to the west, Howard Street on the north, Parliament Street on the east and Wellesley Street to the south.
- St. James is now the most densely populated community in Canada. Today, the towers are mostly home to newly arrived immigrant families, with only 33% being born in Canada, according to the 2011 Census. *Let us pray that given many recent immigrants live here, to encourage tolerance and generosity,* **Exodus 22:21** “Do not mistreat or oppress a foreigner, for you were foreigners in Egypt.”
- Route: Cross Sherbourne and walk two blocks along Howard to Ontario St. The Church of St. Simon and St. Peter is on the north side of this T intersection. *Let us pray for the work this church does with homeless men:* **Hebrews 10:25** “not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”
- The tall apartment buildings along Howard St and Ontario St are occupied by both multi-generational and single parent families. Bedbug and cockroach infestations are an ongoing struggle. *There are many children living in these buildings, let us pray for the Lord’s love for them,* **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.’”

- Walking south on Ontario Street, passing the Rose Park School, *let us pray on the importance of teaching things to our children, Deuteronomy 4:9* "Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them."
- Let us also pray for Toronto City Mission's Sonshine Camp for children from grade 1 to 6 to be held during the summer. Many children represent minorities persecuted in their home countries.  
**Hebrews 6:18** "we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged."  
**John 10:10** "Jesus said: 'I have come that they might have life, and have it to the full'"
- **Turn right on St. James Ave:** we have some open space here, site of a summer farmers' market, and people in the community put out wares, and sometimes oriental carpets, to sell along the walkway down to Wellesley Street. Still, this is not enough green space for the large number of children and youth in the area. *Let us pray for the safety of the children as they play: Psalm 139:1*, "You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways."
- **As we walk along St. James Ave**, note the tall white building on your left, 200 Wellesley Street East. On September 24, 2010 a devastating fire broke out in this building, it took almost a year before residents could return home; most lost all of their possessions. This affected St. Paul's parishioners. *Let us pray for those who are suffering at this time. Psalm 34:18* "The Lord is close to the broken-hearted. He rescues those whose spirits are crushed."  
At the corner of St. James and Sherbourne note the new library and community centre down the block at the corner of Wellesley, and Our Lady of Lourdes church across the street. Many children in the community attend Our Lady of Lourdes Separate School, further south on Sherbourne.  
**Isaiah 56:7** "these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations."
- **Turning north on Sherbourne**, our walk back to Bloor Street takes us past another giant condo building in the final stages of construction. There will be retail at street level, including a new Loblaws store. This complex replaced the neighbourhood No Frills, now located in the shopping centre several blocks away at Bloor Street.
- As we reach Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church given the diversity of congregations in Toronto, *let us pray for this neighbouring church serving both Korean and English-speaking congregations: 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."
- **Turning left on Bloor Street** to return to St. Paul's, note the TD Bank branch across the street and reflect that this is the closest bank to St. James Town. Poorer communities are typically underserved by the big banks.