

Yorkville

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.

Yorkville: Toronto’s first suburb, St. Paul’s was its parish church

Route: Walk to the corner of Yonge & Bloor, cross to north west corner walk one block north and turn on to Cumberland Street.

- **Bloor Street** is named after Joseph Bloor, innkeeper and brewer – his brewery was built at the corner of Sherbourne Street, the site of the subway entrance today. Breweries were plentiful in the 19th century: the water wasn’t always safe to drink, water filtration plants were not built until the end of that century. Today’s micro breweries are following reflect our earliest history.
- Joseph Bloor sold the brewery in 1843 and purchased land at Yonge Street and Concession #2 (later Bloor Street) and divided it into lots sold to early Yorkville residents and businesses.
- The first St Paul’s church had already been built, on Yonge St near Concession 2, designed by York’s (the early name for Toronto) first professional architect, John G. Howard (he left his estate to the city, High Park). In his diary, Howard referred to working on “a little church up Yonge Street.” St. Paul’s opened for its first service on June 12, 1842.

*Let us give thanks to God for the origins of our community that exists to worship Him: **Psalm 26:8**: “I love the house where you live O lord, the place where your glory dwells”. Recognizing that this church was moved to the current site on Bloor St, we are reminded that for 40 years in the wilderness, God’s house was constantly on the move: **Numbers 1: 51** “Whenever the tabernacle is to move, the Levites are to take it down and whenever the tabernacle is to be set up, the Levites shall do it”.*

Let us pray for those who do not have their own “place of worship”.

- As we walk along Cumberland Street note the small yellow brick building housing a cigar store, one of the few early buildings left in this block.
- At Bay Street, cross to the west side and walk one block north to Yorkville Avenue. Bay Street has turned into a canyon lined with tall condo buildings, as Toronto continues to reinvent itself. *Condo – highrise – living can be lonely, **Deuteronomy 31:8** “The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”*
- Turning west along Yorkville a few of the Victorian houses are still discernable, if you look closely. This block was known in the 1960’s for coffee houses, including the Riverboat Cafe, where Joni Mitchell, Gordon Lightfoot, Neil Young and other legendary Canadian musicians played early in their careers. *Let*

*us pray for the artists and performers who enrich our lives and gives thanks for the way in which music can touch our emotions in the Church and outside: **Psalm 150:3-5**, "Praise Him with the sounding of the trumpet, with the harp and lyre, with tambourine and dancing and wit strings and flute"*

- Note another 19th Century house at 77 Yorkville, at the corner of Bellair. This is the John Daniels house, he was village constable and reputedly entertained "overnight guests" in a shed behind the house.
- Continue along Yorkville Ave to turn left into Old Yorkville Lane to Cumberland Street and cross to south side. Turn right towards Avenue Road, the hulking Renaissance Centre condo towers over the street ahead to your left. Once you pass the building's loading dock, turn into the "Passage to Bloor Street" which leads to The Church of the Redeemer
- The Church of the Redeemer was 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^{al}of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches."

- Turn left along Bloor Street and walk along "Mink Mile" back to St Paul's. Bloor Street has evolved from its humble rural beginnings to acquire a stylish reputation as the brand name flagships found along it, including Canada's haute style Holt Renfrew.

*Many valuable items can be purchased here including precious stones which are used to illustrate God's magnificence, **Revelation 4:2** "There before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow resembling an emerald encircled the throne".*

However, jewellery and fancy clothes can also create an image that is not consistent with God's calling,

Jeremiah 4:30 "What are you doing O devastated one? Why dress yourself in scarlet and put on jewels of gold? Why shade your eyes with paint? You adorn yourself in vain. Your lovers despise you; they seek your life"

- Note The Colonnade on the south side of Bloor Street, 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.
- **Continue east back to St Paul's. Duration: 30 minutes.**