

Newtonbrook United Church

1805

Cummer's neighbourhood Charge was part of the Yonge Street Circuit formed by the Methodist Church.

1834

Cummer Settlement Methodist Episcopal Chapel (Now Willowdale United Church) was built on 1/2 acre donated by Jacob Cummer.

1857

Land donated by Thomas Davidson allowed the congregations of Agar's Appointment and the Parsonage Chapel to build a white brick building and come together as one congregation. The church had galleries on three sides and a two manual organ that was operated by a hand blower. The choir was seated at the back of the church with the organ. The Parsonage Chapel was hauled up Yonge Street and placed at the rear of the church and used as a Sunday School.

1858

The church dedicated in February was called Newton Brook Wesleyan Methodist Church. The Newton part was named after the Rev. Robert Newton, a Wesleyan Methodist minister of Yorkshire, England who was well known and respected in Methodism. The Brook part was after Wilket Creek which crossed Yonge Street and Cummer Avenue at the time.

1863

The surrounding community was then called Newton Brook, after the church although some say it was named after Sir Isaac Newton.

1884

Four different groups of Methodists including those from Newfoundland and Bermuda came together to form the Methodist Church of Canada. The name of our church then changed to Newton Brook Methodist Church.

1887

The church was remodeled. The gallery was replaced by a horse shoe shaped balcony, the reed organ was replaced by a pipe organ. A 16 lamp chandelier and red carpet were installed.



1888

May 22 before the renovations were paid for, the parsonage chapel and the church burned down. Talks about merging with Willowdale Methodist were dismissed as no suitable basis for union could be found. A new red brick church was built on the same site and dedicated on December 27th. The Parsonage was built where 5670 Yonge Street (the Xerox tower) stands today.

1897

The father of Rt. Honorable Lester B. Pearson was the minister of Newton Brook Methodist Church and Lester was born in the parsonage.



1920

A division of the Yonge Street circuit meant that Willowdale Methodist Church now needed its own parsonage and Newton Brook had to put up half the cost leaving no money for maintenance on their own parsonage. The Rev. A.N. St. John's wife started a Bible Study Class called the Joy Bells with members belonging to 11 denominations.

1924

In May the parsonage was put up for sale but did not sell. It was decided to sell 120 feet of the back lot to pay for a bathroom and hardwood floors. The Ladies' Aid paid for the painting of the parsonage and the draining of the cellar.

1925

June 10 the joining of the 4 groups (Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Local Union Churches) created the United Church of Canada. Our church was renamed Newton Brook United Church.

1928

The parsonage post office address was changed from Finch's Corners to Northmount.

1931

Yonge Street was widened to 4 lanes. Department of Highways bought 34' of property. With the money and additional help the entrance was moved to the south side in a newly built tower. A new lighting system was installed, a 20' addition to the Sunday School new coloured glass windows in the west side, the pulpit and choir gallery enlarged, and the entire church repainted and decorated. The horse shelter was taken down as it was no longer needed.

1945

Under the provision of the Veterans Land Act property purchased in this area enabled veterans to acquire land and build homes at reasonable cost. Many of these families attended Newtonbrook United Church. On December 18th the Church Hall was destroyed by fire.

1946

New Church Hall was opened and the dedication services were held on the 3rd and 10th of March.

1950

Post office address of the parsonage was changed from Northmount to Willowdale.

1951

On April 1st, the parsonage was sold for \$18,000 for a car dealership and a house at 12 Finch Avenue, East was purchased for \$14,000.



1953

A new pipe organ was installed and dedicated in honour of members of the congregation who gave their lives in WWI and WWII.



1955

The 115th anniversary required two services to accommodate the 550 membership which had grown by 150 in two years.

1957

It was decided that a new and larger facility was required to accommodate the ever increasing membership.

1959

The property on Yonge Street was sold to a developer for a shopping centre (now Newtonbrook Plaza). Property was purchased at 53 Cummer Avenue.



1960

First Phase was completed; part of the sanctuary, the offices and the Fellowship Room. It was dedicated in February.



1961

The Second Phase was started to enlarge the sanctuary and add the narthex, balcony and tower.

1962

Second Phase completed and dedicated February 11. January was the inaugural meeting of the U.C.W. which combined the Women's Association and the Women Missionary Society.

1963

Membership recorded as 1100 and 1400 attended the Sunday Service before Christmas. Manse at 12 Finch Avenue East sold and the replacement on Michigan Avenue purchased.

1965

Meals on Wheels started with meals cooked in the homes and then at St. John's Hospital.

1970

Contemporary intergenerational services began. Starting at 9:30 AM, the service provided an alternate form of service with lay members taking much of the responsibility.

1972

"Enriching lives through actively responding to God's love" adopted as Newtonbrook United Church's mission statement.

1975

Mortgage was burned.

1979

Newtonbrook sponsored first Beaver Colony in Ontario.

1980

Contemporary services ceased in May.

1981

The laminated arches in the sanctuary were reinforced.

First picture directory was published followed by four more in 1987, 1993, 1997, 2002 and 2007.



1983

Taiwanese began to share facility. They applied in April to become members of the United Church of Canada. The application was approved in November and a joint service took place in December.

1984

The oil furnace was converted to natural gas and the slant roof was insulated and re-shingled.



1990

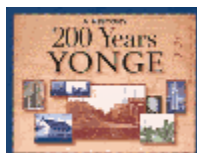
Newtonbrook United Church celebrated its 150th anniversary. Phase Three of the church was completed and opened in March making the church fully accessible.

1994

"To maintain and enhance Newtonbrook United Church as a vibrant Christian community which will sustain and enrich its people while responding to the needs of the wider community" was adopted as Newtonbrook United Church's new mission statement.

The NUC-TUCT Non-Profit Homes Corporation incorporated to further the Newtonbrook United Church (NUC) and Taiwanese United Church in Toronto (TUCT) congregations desire to respond to the housing crisis.

Formation of the Don Valley Refugee Resettlers (DVRR) Team, a group with representatives from eight United Churches in Toronto Don Valley Presbytery, to sponsor refugees. NUC is an active player on this team.



1996

Summer celebration of "200 Years Yonge". The anniversary of the building of Yonge Street.



1999

January 13 was the start of the Wednesday Drop Inn program, co-sponsored by NUC-TUCT and Toronto North Support Services. A breakfast is served in the morning and a hot 4 course meal at noon to those in need with many support and social agencies on site. The program operates year round.

2000

The NUC-TUCT Non-Profit Homes Corporation obtained charitable status and fund raising for the program began. Obtained 2nd mortgage from Let's Build, City of Toronto for a 53 unit apartment building on the church property.

Renovation to the Chancel area to reposition the choir to face the congregation.

2001

Major repairs to the tower.

Funding obtained from the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) for renovations of washrooms, including addition of a shower for the Drop Inn program and upgrading of kitchen counter and floor.

2002

On December 8 the building for the NUC-TUCT Non-Profit Housing Project was named 'Lester B. Pearson Place' recognizing the birth of Lester Pearson in the parsonage of Newton Brook Methodist Church Manse in 1897.



2005

Construction of Lester B. Pearson Place began on February 28th.



2006

Tenants moved into Lester B. Pearson Place in July



2007

The official opening of Lester B. Pearson Place on May 11. The manse on Michigan Avenue was sold in August.