

*A History of Farmers, Their
Children, and New Families
Creating Our Church Home
— A Church Home
For Each One of Us*

**Oriole-York Mills United Church
The Church of the Good Shepherd**

**50th Anniversary
1962 – 2012**

**You are invited to our
50th Anniversary Celebration
at Oriole York Mills United Church,
the Church of the Good Shepherd,
on Sunday April 29th, starting at 11 am**

What's happening?

- ⇒ Celebrate OYM's 50 years and reflect on both the past and the future in the Worship Service at 11 am in our church sanctuary.
- ⇒ Enjoy time with friends old and new, including members of Centennial-Japanese United Church.
- ⇒ Partake of refreshments, including the 50th anniversary cake and enjoy the company after the worship service in Fellowship Hall.
- ⇒ See the photo display in Fellowship Hall.
- ⇒ Ladies, please wear a hat to church – as you or your mother did 50 years ago.
- ⇒ Gentlemen, please wear a tie pin – as you and your father did 50 years ago.
- ⇒ Take home happy memories of our heritage and of the faith and fellowship that sustains us all.

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Information Sources and Intent

Multiple sources were used to gather information and photos for this booklet, including:

- History of Oriole-York-Mills United Church of Canada, The Church of the Good Shepherd, by Mr. Walter Rean.
- A Historical Sketch of Oriole-York Mills United Church – for the 25th Anniversary – by Dr. John W. Grant.
- A photo album from the congregation of Oriole-York Mills United Church presented to Rev. Amos in 1967.
- Early church records, histories summarised for OYM’s Canvassing for the Building Fund, ground-breaking ceremony, dedication, and subsequent church anniversary celebrations, and various supporting notes and newspaper clippings.
- Annual reports.

The intent of creating this booklet was to summarise the history of Oriole-York Mills United Church. Any misrepresentation of what truly happened in the past, omissions, or incorrect spellings are regretted.

Moiria Mancera – April 2012

Our Methodist Heritage

Saddlebag Ministries

In the 1700s, most of the small churches had a resident minister who was unable to reach everyone in the surrounding widely scattered rural communities. Then in 1791 (221 years ago) the Methodist saddlebag preachers arrived in Upper Canada from the United States. They set up an alternative system on which their name was based. They selected bright and fervent young people from among their converts and launched them in pairs to preach. These young people were expected to find their flocks while learning their trade. Each month a circuit could include twenty or more teaching points. When the American preachers had to withdraw during the War of 1812, one circuit extended from Holland Marsh to Long Point on Lake Erie.

Methodist Sunday Schools

Sunday Schools did not get well under way in Canada until 1825 and then mainly in city churches. Problems in the rural areas, such as in North York, were obtaining Sunday School materials (such as they were), whether the teacher could write on the slate, if available, and the supervision of itinerant pastors. Over the years only slow progress was made in Canada. However, in 1875 it was said that, "the Methodist Church had the largest Sunday School development of any denomination in the Dominion".

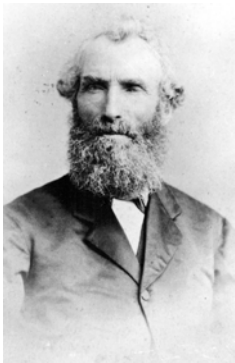
Wesley Methodists in Canada

Many branches of Methodism formed in Canada and there were at least 15 different branches from England, Ireland and the United States. Unions were formed as the population increased and the country developed. Finally in 1884, The Methodist Church of Canada (including the Wesley Methodists that are part of OYM's history), the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada, Primitive Methodists in Canada, and the Bible Christian Church all united to form The Methodist Church.

Local worshipping groups based on Wesley Methodism were usually small. Leaders were commonly prominent community members who would invite a group to form a fellowship group or class in their homes.

Clark's Wesley Methodist Congregation

Thomas Clark was one of the community leaders who welcomed a class into his home. This was the founding class from which Oriole-York Mills United Church has come.



Clark was the younger son of a titled father in Yorkshire, England. It is possible that he had been involved with Methodism in England. Without hope of succeeding to a title, he emigrated to Canada with some family money.

Clark bought 200 acres along the south side of Sheppard between Bayview and Leslie. It cost him 900 pounds in 1841. He lived there until 1884.

Clark's class, the first roots of OYM, met by 1848 (154 years ago) in his home. The first reference of the Clark congregation in Methodist records is in 1852. The record is of a 'class' of the Newtonbrook congregation. In 1853, Clark's class became one of the 12 preaching points of a Methodist Yonge Street circuit.

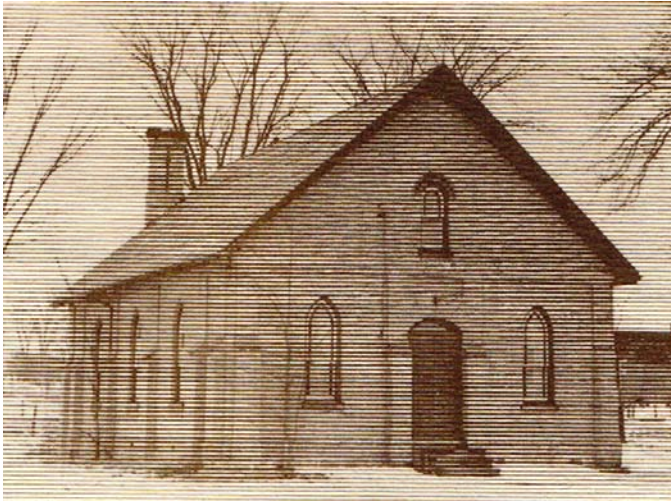
Around 1856, a brick schoolhouse was built on Clark's property. The group later moved into this schoolhouse until their church was built.

A Church Building

In 1873, the Clark congregation built a church on Clark's land on the corner of Sheppard and Old Leslie Street – 139 years ago. The congregation raised a simple 30' x 50' brick building. Wood for construction came from Edward Hunter – his 1873 bill for this lumbar and sawing survives. The total bill was \$154.78, but Mr. Hunter took off \$75 as a subscription to the building fund.

Also in 1873, the first steam train in Toronto left from a wooden shed on Front Street, opposite The Queen's Hotel. It was bound for Barrie.

How different transportation is for us today!



The new church had eight Gothic-styled windows, with small coloured inserts, to light the simple sanctuary. The heat came from two wood-burning box stoves and congregational singing was led by a reed organ.

Later in 1875, Clark transferred the 4/10th of an acre where the church had been built to the 'Trustees of Clark's Congregation of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada in connection with the English Conference'. The price was \$50.

The congregation was known as Clark's until around 1878, then as East York until 1913, and then as the Oriole Methodist Church until it became Oriole United Church in 1925.

Clark's Wesleyan Methodist Congregation path toward Oriole United Church was not smooth. Methodism was

not universally popular and the notorious Markham Gang threatened to burn William Mulholland's house and barns if he persisted in teaching Sunday School. More seriously, the congregation came from sparsely settled farmland and failed to grow. It was often served by students and retired ministers, sometimes joined other congregations, and even had to suspend services for several years.

Names to Note

William Mulholland (whose barns were threatened) was one of the founding members of the Clark Congregation and was credited in founding the first Sunday School in East York. His family is commemorated in the cairn at Manor Park Court – south of Sheppard and west of Leslie.

George S. Henry was Sunday School Superintendent at the Oriole Church for over forty years. The congregation's survival at that time was mainly due to his involvement and commitment. He operated a large farm at Oriole from 1897. His Sunday School involvement continued while he served as Ontario's premier from 1930 to 1934.



Records of money collected at Clark's branch 1863-4 include Thomas and Michael Shepard, sons of Joseph Shepard of Lansing after whom Sheppard Avenue was probably named. Thomas Shepard became a son-in law of Thomas Clark.

Links with Other Congregations

Early records are scant. An 1878 record shows that Eglinton, Newton, Downsview, Clark's, Fairbank and Asbury were covered by two ministers. Their salaries and expenses (including expenses for rent, 'horsekeep' and horse shoeing) totalled \$1,764. Clark's congregation paid \$108 of this total. In 1885 East York (Oriole) was linked with Willowdale and Newtonbrook. By 1905 the circuit included East York/Clark's with the Willowdale, Newtonbrook and Zion congregations.

From 1913 the congregation was listed as Oriole. The congregation was small and records are sparse suggesting that it was dwindling. In 1919, the Oriole congregation was again in a charge with the Willowdale congregation. Records in 1920 include attendance of 15-25 at Oriole Sunday School, mostly small children.

Other records of the Oriole Sunday School attendance in the 1940s confirm a link with Willowdale United Church.

Oriole United Church

Oriole United is first recorded in United Church records as part of the Bethesda charge, with the Bethesda and Concord congregations in 1928.

The first Holy Communion Service in the Oriole United Church was not held until October 1, 1933.

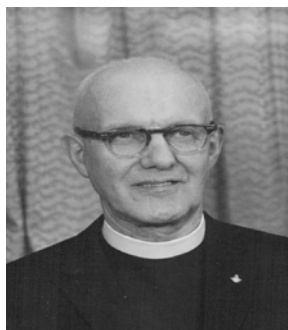
Displaced and Growing

Toronto was developing and commercial land was needed in the Sheppard Leslie area. In October 1955, a joint committee of church members and representatives from Toronto Home Mission Council were appointed to find a new church site for the growing Oriole United congregation.

Harrison Road Public School Worship

Sunday services were transferred to Harrison Road Public School (in a growing subdivision east of Bayview known as York Mills Garden) in May 1957.

Mr. J.F McKay, a student at Emmanuel College conducted Sunday services, gave pastoral leadership, and canvassed the community successfully. A number of people with no previous connection with the Oriole church responded to an invitation that was circulated.



Rev. George D. McLeod started as minister for the congregation in September 1957. At that time representatives from the Toronto Home Mission Council, including the Director of Church Extension for Greater Toronto, and Toronto East Presbytery joined church members to sponsor the formation of a new congregation.



In February 1958, the Sunday School transferred from the Oriole Church to Harrison Road School.

Constituting the Congregation

It was not until January 1959 that presbytery approved the name of Oriole-York Mills United Church for the new congregation.

On the Wednesday evening of February 11th, 1959, 114 Charter Members were listed as affirming their faith at Harrison Road Public School.* The congregation of Oriole-York Mills United Church was then constituted by the Presbytery Chairman, Rev. A.R. Baggs, as a Congregation of the United Church of Canada.

* Later reports are of 106 Charter Members suggesting that some listed on February 11th could not attend.

The Annual Report of 1959 describes the date of this Constitution of the Congregation on February 11th, 1959 as Oriole-York Mills United Church's birthday!

The description of 'the Church of the Good Shepherd' was added in December 1961.

The Rollscourt Drive Manse

As well as planning for a new church, the congregation bought a home (manse) for the new minister Rev. Donald Amos and his family, including four children.



The purchased price for 56 Rollscourt Drive was \$35,000 and adaptations cost an additional \$1,000.

This manse was also the site of church meetings – meetings about canvassing for building funds, who to engage as architect and developer, how to maintain and develop the congregation, and more.



Raising Funds for a New Church Home

A Building Fund and Budget Canvas appeal started in May 1960, but there had been many months of planning in preparation for this part of the church development plans.

A specially prepared pamphlet included guidance about deciding how much to give. Both 'canvassers' and the more numerous 'hostesses' were part of the canvassing organisation. A goal of \$160,000 was established and the congregation was asked to consider, "What would Jesus give?"

A later mortgage for some of the funding partly depended on 30 church members being guarantors. Many of these members mortgaged their own homes as security.

Church members were also invited to make memorial donations for purchase of various items needed in the church, e.g., lecterns, offering plates. These memorial donations are recorded in the Book of Remembrance, stored in the glass case in the narthex.

Planning the Church



Having interviewed a number of architects, the congregation selected the Brown and Brisley company to design the church. They provided this sketch of the new church.

Members were called to a meeting on Thursday September 29th, 1960 to approve the basic design and plan for the new church.

The 'Before' Building Site

Against a snowy scene a sign announced 'Site of Oriole-York Mills United Church' and marked the Bayview Avenue site bought for \$44,000. As our current electric sign has many passers-by, so this wooden sign drew attention to the site of the future church (and gave notice of worship services at Harrison Road Public School.)



Ground Breaking at 2609

The Shepherd Staffs

The three shepherd staffs that we have in the sanctuary were created by the late John Reid in his 79th year. He had his blacksmith business opposite the old Oriole Church. The photo below show Rev. Amos with John Reid and the symbolic shepherd's staffs at Mr. Reid's blacksmith workshop.





These symbolic staffs shown above were used in the ground breaking ceremony and later at the dedication of our church.

Easter Sunday 1961 Ground Breaking

Following a worship service at Harrison Road School, the congregation gathered at the new site for the Hallowing

and Breaking of the Ground ceremony on Sunday April 2nd, Easter Sunday.



There was a harsh April wind blowing on this snowy April day.

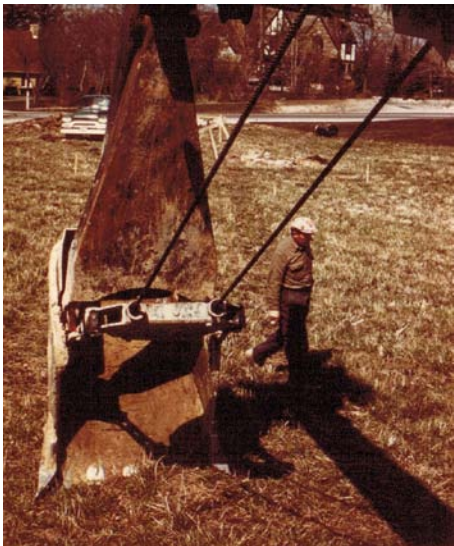
In this photo, Janet Lawson, Jack Spiers and Paul Amos, representing youth of the church, kneel

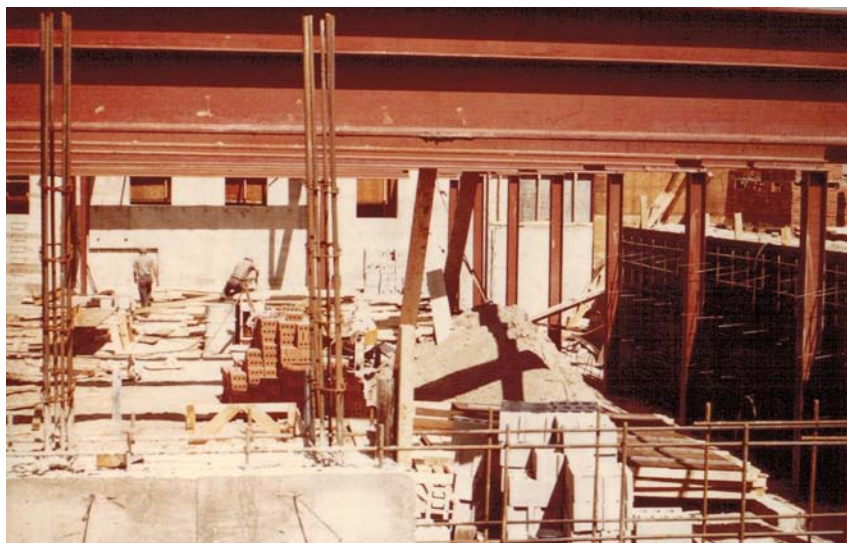
at the ground breaking ceremony at the new site. (Jack Spiers was a grandson of the blacksmith who created the staffs and Paul Amos one of Rev. Amos' sons). Each youth holds a newly created shepherd staff. These staffs were used to symbolically mark the site of the entrances of the future building and key worship positions.

'In Progress' Building Site - a photo story

The congregation must have been excited to see the building start in May 1961. It must also have been difficult at those early stages to visualise the building that was to become Oriole-York Mills United Church.

Construction of the new church was by Bennet-Pratt Ltd. of Toronto. George Huston was the superintendent. The photos on the following pages show some of the stages of the church construction during 1961.





Ready to go, then one by one raised by the crane.





In the first photo below on the left, the camponile crowned by an orb and cross (made by Delcon Steel Ltd.) is being raised to its position towering almost 50 feet above the ground.



This ancient Christian symbol of orb and cross is found among the Crown Jewels of England. During a Coronation, the orb and cross are given to the monarch with the challenging admonition:

“When you see this Orb thus set under the Cross, remember that the whole world is subject to the power and empire of Christ.”

The placement of rugged field-stone placed on the outside



walls by De Carlos Bros. speaks of the pioneer struggle and the strength, which the church brought to those who farmed the fields where many of our homes now stand. These stones also complement Municipal buildings and a shopping centre that had been recently built in the community.

The figure of the Good Shepherd on the west wall of the church holds a staff and looks longingly out over Bayview Avenue (shown on next page). This reminds us that Oriole-York Mills United Church is described as The Church of the Good Shepherd.

This figure on the west wall was designed by artist William McElchran and created by stone-cutter Louis Temporelli.



Finally, finishing off inside the sanctuary.



The Foundation Stone Placement

On Sunday September 17th, 1961, the congregation gathered to witness the foundation stone placement at the south entrance by Rev. Donald Amos.



1962 Dedication of Oriole-York Mills United Church

After the assembly of the people on January 7th, 1962, the minister symbolically knocked a shepherd staff repeatedly on the doors. Subsequently the Chairman of the Trustees formally unlocked the door with a key he had obtained from the contractor. The ministers then entered the sanctuary and the stage by stage dedication proceeded.

Guests at the Dedication of the new church included:

- Dr. Bruce Brown, Architect,
- Rev. Ernest Marshal Howse, President of Toronto Conference, Minister of Bloor St. United Church,
- Mr. Ralph S. Mills, President of Toronto Home Missions Council,
- Rev. George D. McLeod, Founding Pastor,
- Rev. Harry W . Kerley, Chairman of Toronto East Presbytery, and
- Rev. Wesley A. Morris, Minister of Bethesda United Church and Interim Moderator of this congregation.

The congregation prayed, “ ... Here may we the faithful find salvation and the careless be quickened to repent. Here may the doubting find faith and the anxious be encouraged to trust. Here may the tempted find deliverance and the sorrowful find comfort. Here may the weary find rest and the strong be renewed. Here may the aged find consolation and the young be instructed and inspired. ...”

We now date our anniversary from this 1962 dedication – and this year we celebrate the 50th anniversary.

First Youth Confirmation Class

Members of the first youth confirmation class were confirmed on Sunday January 21st, 1962.



In the photo above, from left to right
 Back row – Brian Domelle, Glen Paton, Norman Lord,
 Rev. Don Amos, Ian Lord, Bob Salisbury,
 Roger Giroux.

Front row – Joanne Brown, Adele Starkweather,
 Dale Joblin, Linda Russell, Linda Clarke, Kathy Stinson,
 Linda McKnight, Sandy Nymark, Karen Williams.

Other Firsts at OYM

Worship Service

Sunday December 17th, 1961: White Gift Sunday

Holy Communion

Sunday January 21st, 1962

Holy Baptism

February 11th, 1962: Elizabeth Ann Jory, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John C. Jory, was baptised.

Holy Matrimony

April 21st, 1962: Frances Jill Beatty was married to Donald Arthur Sears.

OYM Featured in 1963 UC Observer

In 1963, Rev. Don Amos wrote about 'Canada's most significant new United Church' as the cover story for the April 1963 UC Observer. Illustrations included a floor plan and photos of the church. Photos were of the front of the church with the Good Shepherd sculpture, of the sanctuary and of the liturgical centre (chancel was a word Rev. Amos chose not to use).

Rev. Amos wrote, "The Church of the Good Shepherd has been designed for Christian worship ... in the reformed tradition." He stressed the importance of placing the bible, the communion table and the baptismal font in a central position. He then described how the liturgical centre design "... heightens the sense that symbolically the people of God are drawn around the Lords table to find the climax

of their worship on receiving the gift of God's love in Jesus Christ, and in offering themselves joyfully in his service.

..."

Ministers Serving at OYM

Sept. 1959 –Aug. 1967	Rev. Donald Amos
Sept. 1967 – Dec. 1979	Rev. William C. Smith
Jan. 1980 – June 1980	Rev. Archibald Scott
July 1980 – Dec. 1991	Rev. Glen Mattinson
Jan. 1992 – June 1992	Rev. Harold Brown
Sept. 1992 - 1998	Rev. J. Kent Clayton
Sept. 1998- June 2001	Rev. Bruce Misener
2001-2006	Rev. John Hilborn
Sept. 2006 – June 2011	Rev. Chris Miller
August 2011 and currently	Rev. Cindy Cooper

Organists, Choir Leaders, and Music Directors

1959 – 1961	Donald Hanson
1962 – 1967	Frank Warren
1967 – 1970	Hazel Olsen
1970 – 1971	Franz Loisgen
1971 – 1972	Terry Seaman
1972	David Marsden
1973 – 1974	David Ball
1975	Hazel Hicks
1976 – 1979	John McElhiney
1979 – 2007	Bob Richardson
2008 and currently	Derrick Lewis

The Many Others Serving

In addition, there were and are many others serving. These others are student ministers, choir members and soloists, committee chairs and members, office staff cum secretaries, and custodians cum janitors, and various volunteers who are not specifically described here.

These many others have contributed to the enhancement of worship experiences and bible study, to the smooth running and repair of our church building, and organisation of auctions, bazaars, congregational gatherings, other church family events, and communications plus OYM's ongoing contributions in the community and the world beyond.

Closing Chapters in Our Church History

The Oriole Church at Leslie and Sheppard was dismantled in 1965. The lot had been sold for \$20,000.

By chance, Walter Rean, OYM's historian, was able to rescue the arch stones of the foundation stone in the rubble of the old church. Then on Sunday June 7th, 1970, the Oriole-York Mills congregation gathered for the re-dedication of the 1873 foundation stone and arch from the old Wesley Methodist then Oriole United Church.

In 1975, OYM repaid the last of the loans to the 1961 Building Fund. Notably, the Toronto Home Commission had forgiven \$10,000 of a \$35,000 loan for prompt payment.

Some of the Events After 1962

Late 1960s	Yorkminster United Church members came to OYM, bringing the Wednesday Outreach program for seniors and their library.
1980	OYM volunteers, along with other sponsors, assisted a Vietnamese boat people family during their first year in Canada. This program led to Don Valley Refugee Resettlers starting!
Nov. 1, 1981	Dedication of new pipe organ ' ... For the enhancement of worship for the church, for an appreciation of the masters, and for the development of the language of praise.'
April 17, 1983	Worship service celebrating development of wheelchair and hearing assistance to benefit those who choose to worship with us and attend community meetings. (The ramp you may now walk on replaced the ramp at the south side when Cedarhurst was built.)
March 10, 1985	Dedication of Oriole-York Mills Library (now in the basement). Books came from individual donations and the Yorkminster Library. Space was organised with money from the 'Bill Smith Memorial Fund', (donations honouring Rev. Bill Smith)
Sept. 2005	Opening of Cedarhurst, adjacent to OYM, providing a caring home exclusively for people living with early to middle stages of Alzheimer disease or related dementia in a community setting.

Look Around Our Church Today

- Coloured glass in sanctuary windows on the right came from the Oriole Church.
- 1874 East York Holy Bible and OYM Memorials Book in glass showcase in narthex.
- A painting of the old church building is in the narthex on the other side of the sanctuary walls from glass showcase. This 1948 painting by the late Murray Stewart shows the church that served first Wesleyan Methodists and then Oriole United Church at Sheppard and Leslie. Les Tibbles' 1982 watercolour paintings of Oriole-York Mills United Church are on the narthex wall above the table over the food bank boxes. Another watercolour of the church by John A. Galilee is on the wall beside the main floor washroom.
- Foundations stones are at the south entrance, near Cedarhurst. The 1873 Wesley Methodist (from the Oriole church) on your right as you exit and OYM's simpler 1961 foundation stone on the wall on your left.
- As you arrive and as you leave, you can see both the lofty campanile, orb and cross and the Good Shepherd sculpture, with his staff, on the west wall of the church overlooking Bayview Avenue and the world beyond.

Last but Not Least – ‘Your Church Speaks’

*This was composed by the late Prof. Kinsley John Joblin for
the Dedication of Oriole York Mills United Church*

I am Oriole-York Mills Church.

My stone walls speak of fields and the strength of the
Creators hand.

My soaring arches within and my campanile without,
Direct the eyes of the soul to the source of man's help.

I stand as a tribute to their Maker by men and women,
Men and women who have given to me gladly of the
substance,

Substance of money; but substance also of thought and
faithful service.

I am Oriole-York Mills Church.

I stand where homes speak of human hopes

And where traffic speaks of human restlessness.

I speak silently of the holiness of beauty;

I invite all to know the beauty of holiness.

I call families into the timelessness family of God;

I call the restless to Him in whose will is our peace.

I am Oriole-York Mills Church.

I am young not long ago these fields felt the plough.

I am old; the pioneers of Oriole knew my ministry.

I am the ancient Church that was born

When the Son of man called disciples to Him;

I have renewed my strength through the ages;

History has been shaped as He uttered His Word through
me.

I am the Church of the Good Shepherd.
 On my west front, see the Christ stand.
 His feet on crushed the powers of darkness;
 His staff is the symbol of his authority;
 His smile is the smile of victory – His wounds are its cost.
 His outstretched hand invites all who pass by –
 His compassion goes out to sheep who have no shepherd.

I am the Church of the Good Shepherd.
 The shepherd looks upon his young, in whom his heart
 delights.
 By the sign of sprinkled water, he calls them into his flock.
 To others who have known his care comes his command –
 “Feed my lambs!” that persons at each stage of their lives
 May know God through Jesus Christ, serving Him in love
 Through worship and work, fellowship and witness – feed
 my lambs.

I am the Church of the Good Shepherd.
 Other sheep have I, who are not of this fold – feed my
 sheep!
 In the cities, on the frontiers, myriads in East and West
 All looking for a Way; show that Way!
 The minds of youth seek for the Truth; share that Truth!
 The souls of men long for Life; give that Life!
 Members of Oriole-York Mills, lovest thou me? Feed my
 sheep!

OYM's Address, Contact Information, and Directions

Oriole-York Mills United Church
 2609 Bayview Avenue
 North York, Ontario M2L 1B5

Phone: 416-447-5941

Email: orioleyorkmills@rogers.com

Web: www.oymunited.net

Oriole-York Mills United Church is on Bayview Avenue south of the highway 401 and north of York Mills Road, and on the east side of Bayview Avenue.

A one-way system for entry and exit operates in the parking lot behind the church. **Please enter the church parking lot on the driveway south of the church at the 2601 Bayview Avenue entrance, driving past the Cedarhurst residence.**

If the parking lot is full, please exit the lot north of the church and turn right, then right again to park on Heathcote Avenue.

For further guidance please visit www.oymunited.net and select 'OYM location and map'.

