



A Historical “Mount Hamilton” Prayer Walk: What’s old is new

This prayer walk brings in some pieces of Hamilton Mountain history and helps us pray for things that... well... really haven't changed all that much. Prayer is still needed. What really lies beneath old pictures and stories is the ongoing state of being human and life in a community. Regardless of timelines, we still need to pray for justice, unity, and stability in our community, but seeing things how they were unveils some pretty interesting history.

Here is what you need to know:

1. The walk is 2 km and the terrain is flat.
2. The starting and ending point is the parking lot at Concession and East 13th. There is no cost to park.
3. The column on the right suggests some ongoing prayers to consider as you walk.
4. Key points of interest on the map above and the pages that follow are marked by a numbered red circle. 
5. The  reminds us to not miss something extra that might be of interest.
6. **Be sure to adhere to all covid guidelines.**



Ongoing prayers: There are seven churches in this small area along and around Concession. See how many you can find and, when you notice one, pray for their congregations, their pastors, and the work they are doing for God's kingdom in this part of the city.



Ongoing prayers:

1. Take time when you are walking to simply be silent with the Lord. To listen. To observe. To rest.
2. Try taking part of your walk to do a breath prayer. Pray silently along with your breath. For example:
Breathing in: “Peace of Christ”
Breathing out: “Guard my heart & mind”
Or In: “I find rest” and out: “in your shelter”



Ongoing prayers: Take note of the various businesses and pray for those that stand out to you... pray that they would be a positive presence in this community and that their businesses would be sustainable through the complications brought on as a result of covid.



End of prayer walk reflection:

How many churches did you find?
The 3 things that stood out to me today were:

Take time to talk or pray further about any of these and revisit them another day should you feel God is inviting you to something.

1 Concession & East 13th St Lot

Welcome to the Sam Lawrence Park (east). As you exit your car, take a look over the wall. Find the Jolley Cut. Make note of the park land, the lower city, and the lake. Sam Lawrence Park is now a beautiful 14.85 acre park with gardens and walking paths and the best views! Prior to 1944, this beautiful park the Webb Quarry.



As you see the Jolley Cut mountain access below, consider what it was like for the first settlers on the escarpment. In the mid 1860s “James Jolley moved to the Mountain on his doctor’s recommendation that his wife’s health demanded ‘mountain air.’ He soon created a footpath to his saddle and harness business on John Street.” Jolley was a pioneer mountain resident who, in 1869, hired workers and built his own road. At that time mountain settlers had to make their own accesses and if they let others use it they charged them. Jolley’s cut was the first toll-free way to get up and down the mountain.



Pray How is this old story relevant to our communities today? Pray about those things that are still important. Innovation? Generosity? Vision? Beauty? Courage? Job creation? Service to others?

Head eastbound on the sidewalk (do not take the park path) and walk along Concession for about 7 minutes til you reach Belwood Ave.

2 Belwood Ave to Mountain Park Ave

Turn left on Belwood and when you reach the end, turn right on Mountain Park Ave (stop if you reach Upper Wentworth). As you walk among these houses, consider how this area is the earliest settlement on the mountain. Initially, this mountain settlement was not considered part of the City of Hamilton but was known as “Mount Hamilton” (the name of my 98 year old church whose first building was only blocks away). By the mid 1800s, more than 200 Black residents lived on this part of the mountain—some were slaves who had escaped the US via the Underground Railway. While they had escaped slavery they were far from being fully free. The children were unable attend schools with white children (which they protested, petitioned, and won for a time in lower city schools), faced aggression, and were not welcomed in (at least some) lower city churches attended by white people. However, one glimpse of hope was found in the Union Mission, an 1862 church build near East 23rd, that held classes to help both children and adults learn to read. Watch for the plaque at the library.



Sadly, we are aware that injustices based on race are still very prevalent locally and well beyond our borders. Currently, residents in this part of the mountain include many new Canadians, some who arrived with refugee status. May we, as the church and as individuals who follow Jesus, be people who are welcoming, generous, and anti-racist.

Pray Pray for what is tugging at your heart as you read this. The horror of slavery? The lack of welcome, poor treatment, segregation? The current refugee crisis? The challenges facing new Canadians? The fact that prejudice and discrimination still exists and the people it impacts? The desire for a better way? Your own racism? Your desire to be anti-racist? Pray about whatever is on your heart.

Continue walking (be sure to turn right on Mountain

3 Mountain Park Ave & Upper Wentworth St.

You have arrived at Upper Wentworth and Mountain Park Ave.. Standing at the top of the escarpment you can see the stairs connecting Wentworth St and Upper Wentworth St. This was also the place of one of Hamilton's two inclines (bonus points if you noticed the name of the condo on the corner!). In the late 1800s, engineers created new ways to get up and down the mountain which came in the form of incline rails.

In 1892, the Hamilton & Barton Incline Railway – or “The Incline” - connected the City of Hamilton (now James St S) with the township of Barton at Caledonia Rd (now Upper James) where it met with the Mountain View Hotel. After three years of successfully moving people and carts up and down the mountain, a second incline was built: The Wentworth Incline Railway – better known as “The East End Incline” which was right where you are standing.



These inclines consisted of 10 and 13 ton cars moving up and down the hill; ticket offices, staff, steam engines, boilers, water tanks, cables, waiting rooms, and residences for the engineer and their family. Planning and constructing required manual labourers, negotiations, provincial charters, etc.

While this part of Hamilton's history seems so old, the processes to achieve completion are remarkably similar. Today roads, LRT, bike lanes, bussing, and bypasses are topics of conversation that require discussion, decisions, and action—no different than when they build the inclines in the late 1800s. Effective and ineffective dialogue transcend calendar dates. Getting things done can lead to conversation and action that can be divisive or unifying.

Pray Pray for our decision makers, politicians, business people, designers, visionaries, contractors, and policymakers – that they would be wise and honourable—creating strong and healthy communities as well as building unifying teams of people.



Don't miss

- the plaque marking the incline—how much was a ride?
- reading the plaque about George Summers. Here is a photo of what once stood here. The plaque explains it.



4 Mountain Park Ave. Walking Path

Walk along the Mountain Park Ave. path for 2 short blocks.

Pray As you look over the city what do you see? What can you identify and what do you know about each place? Are they places of crisis, injustice, division, or instability? Pray accordingly. Where you see areas of peace, joy, beauty, justice, unity and stability—pray accordingly. If you don't know what to pray, simply entrust our city to God and spend a moment in quiet reflection for all that you see.

Turn right onto Cliff Ave. Stop when you reach Concession St.

5 Concession & Cliff (look east)

Now at the corner of Concession St and Cliff Ave, look to your left and see if you can see Jurvinsky Hospital. It is a massive, orange coloured brick building. In 1917 it was a small new hospital—Mountain Hospital, on a huge piece of property. This was a desired location because the land was cheap and people believed that the air on the escarpment had health benefits (recall James Jolley's wife!). The hospital had a maternity ward, operating room, and nurses residence.

Around this time, electricity was a new invention and major health crises included the flu pandemic, tuberculosis, childbirth, infant mortality and, oddly enough, car accidents (imagine the learning curve!).



Things sure were different then but we *still* have a long list of health concerns, especially in the midst of our own pandemic.

Pray When you think of stability in the area of health and see glimpses of the hospital and cancer centre, what crosses your mind? Thank God for what is good and pray earnestly for what is on your heart at the moment. You may pray for the system as a whole, for yourself, someone you know, or maybe for people you have never met.

Stay on that corner as you read the “don’t miss” box.

! Don't miss

On the corner of Concession & Cliff check out the pictures on the side and front of Concession Street Library. Take a moment to *pray* for those who work tirelessly to bring stability to people in our city, such as child advocates, long term care facilities, substance abuse counseling, job placement, food/housing, etc.

6 Concession (heading west)

As you begin to walk west on Concession, you will see the Zoetic Theatre, just a block or two from the library. In the late 1800s and before it became a theatrical site, the Daniel Cotter Hotel stood in that spot. By the early 1900s, the women from the Methodist church did not like the hotel's alcohol sales because of the drunken rowdiness that it caused. So they started a campaign, raised money, bought the hotel... and the mountain went dry! The first theatre was built in 1920 and, by 1930, operated as the Lyceum theatre. This, and the Summers' theatre at the top of the incline created a thriving mountain theatre district.

These Methodist women had hutzpah and pushed back against the status quo. Not many years later, Sam Lawrence protested on behalf of workers who were not getting time off and were not paid properly. Perhaps you were inspired to protest over the proposed downtown casino, or you went to a Black Lives Matter rally this summer, or maybe you have had to stand up for something you felt was unjust... something that made you an advocate... an ally... for someone or a cause of some sort.

Pray Pray for the courage and wisdom to listen, think critically, and act when you need to be an advocate... when you need to stand alongside... when you need to speak for someone who doesn't have a voice. Has something been on your mind lately? Is there something God is inviting you to do?

Continue walking westbound on Concession.

7 Concession & East 18th

Just past the Drug store on the south side of Concession, you can't miss George L. Armstrong School. The land was purchased in 1919 for \$15,000. The school was built in 1929 and is the oldest school on the mountain and one of the oldest functioning schools in Hamilton. George L. Armstrong worked for the Board for over 30 years.

Pray for our families and children. There is such instability in their lives because of the pandemic. Think about life kids of all ages—toddlers, older children, teens—and the challenges they have around school and friends. Think of parents, teachers, and the decision makers in all of this. Families desperately need your prayers!

Keep walking and you will arrive back to your car where you can consider what resonated most with you today!

Endnote;

1. Concession Street History <https://www.concessionstreet.ca/history-of-our-street.html>

Photos:

Concession Street BIA, History: Jolley Cut, Summers Theatre, Mountain Hospital

Wentworth Incline images: trainweb.org

Webb Quarry: lost the source

Plackard at Library: uncertain although I personally took the same photo this month ;)

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Trainweb:Hamilton's Transit History, Hamilton and Barton Incline Railway and Wentworth Incline Railway www.trainweb.org

Vintage Hamilton Facebook Page

Wikipedia: Concession Street, Hamilton Ontario, wikipedia.org/wiki/Concession_Street (Hamilton, Ontario)