

*The Congregation of Oak United Church*

*cordially invites you to be present*

*at the Ceremony of*

*The Laying of the Foundation Stone*

*of their new Church edifice*

*Oak Street, in the Regent Park Area.*

*at 3 o'clock on the afternoon of*

*Saturday, May 1st, 1954*



**WHAT?** THE CHURCH should be the very heart of the community where young and old gather for worship and for many other Church activities. Life in the Regent Park area has been subject to great upheavals of late. Old homes have been replaced by modern and attractive apartments, and as each block has been completed, houses have been vacated and demolished. It has been a "moving" experience.

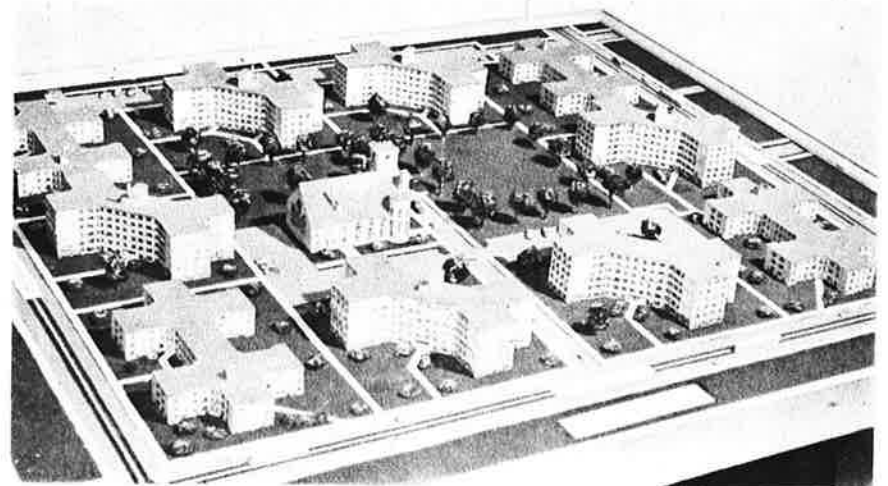
Throughout this mass migration we have held the hope that as the life of the community once again became stabilized with the gradual completion of the housing project, our Church could render a continually expanding service to the community. We believe that our new building will make possible the fulfilment of our high hopes.

With the increased and modern accommodation to be provided many more activities can be undertaken. Our Church School will give better Christian training to more and more girls and boys. Youth may find an ever increasing part in our Church life. Our new and attractive facilities will bring new life to present activities, and beget fresh enthusiasm for increased community efforts. Such is our faith as we undertake this task.

OAK UNITED CHURCH stands ready to serve the community. Minister, deaconesses and members will welcome opportunities for such service.  
**YOUR HELP IN MAKING THIS MINISTRY POSSIBLE WILL BE GREATLY APPRECIATED**

THE OAK UNITED CHURCH OFFICE IS NOW LOCATED AT 32 OAK STREET, TORONTO, 2  
PHONE EM 3-2566  
REV. FRED SMITH, MINISTER      MR. T. MCFADYEN, TREASURER

## WHY A NEW CHURCH IN REGENT PARK ?



## WHY?

OAK UNITED CHURCH is situated in the centre of the greatest public housing development in Canada, the Regent Park Housing Project, Toronto.

When the north half of this project is completed in 1955, approximately 1300 families or close to 6000 people, including about 1500 school-age children, will be housed in new homes and apartments. In addition another 1000 family units are contemplated for the south half of the area.

Soon 10,000 people will be living in this compact area. Not an old brick will be used - - A NEW CITY WITHIN AN OLD CITY. In the centre of the blocks will be parks and playgrounds.

The picture shows the final section of the northern project.

OAK UNITED CHURCH is to stand in the middle of this section, surrounded by park lands. The three and six storey apartment blocks shown will themselves house over 600 new families. No city church ever had a more challenging opportunity.

The old church edifice could not be adapted to the new needs. Its large and beautiful auditorium, loved by many, needed constant and extensive repairs. Accommodation for midweek activities was most limited. Architecturally the building could not be fitted into the new surroundings. The brickwork was crumbling badly, and alterations to the edifice to adapt it to modern needs were estimated by experts to be as costly as a new church would be.

Reluctantly it was decided that the ministry of this grand old church must now close, and that a new church, planned for the special nature of the work, must be built on the same site.

## HOW?

BUILDING COSTS are at a record high, but we believe that the challenge will be met. Though a final estimate of the cost of a new church building is not yet available, we know that it will be somewhat in excess of \$100,000.

While the Home Mission authorities of The United Church of Canada will support this project to the limit of their ability, the congregation is rallying to this unique opportunity and will do its part.

The previous sale of properties of the congregation which united to form Oak United Church has resulted in approximately \$40,000 being available towards this building project.

The Oak United congregation is accepting a further immediate objective of \$20,000. In addition to this, the congregation will be largely responsible for the furnishings of the new Church.

### WILL YOU HELP MAKE OUR DREAMS COME TRUE?

#### To whom can we appeal?

To our church members, of course. Indications are that they are going to do their part nobly.

To all friends in the Regent Park area who will wish us well in our plan to continue and expand the influence of the Church in this great new housing project.

To all former members and adherents. So many owe so much to the Church fellowship of past days.

And to all others who value the place of the Church in the development of the downtown area of this great city.

STATEMENT from the BUILDING COMMITTEE  
read by the Chairman of the Committee,  
Mr. S. H. Robinson.

The Oak United Church congregation came into existence in July, 1942, with the amalgamation of the three congregations, St. Giles' United Church, King Street United Church and Parliament Street United Church. It was decided that the united congregation should use the St. Giles' building on Oak Street until the new congregation had become more settled and was able to survey the needs of the community and to prepare to adequately serve it. At that time the question of the rebuilding of the Regent Park area was beginning to be considered, and as plans developed through the years, and this great Housing Project got under way, the need for a different type of edifice became more and more apparent. Great changes have taken place throughout these years, not only in the layout of the community, but also in its personnel, many of our members moving to other parts of the city. The Home Mission authorities of The United Church of Canada had given much thought to the matter of a new building and the development of the Housing Project made it seem more and more essential that whatever action was taken must be after much planning.

Two years ago, in cooperation with the Toronto Home Missions Council, much consideration was given to the needs of the work, and the provision of more adequate facilities. At first it was hoped that the old Church might be remodelled in such a way that it would meet the needs, but the report of the architects indicated that such work would be as costly as would a new building, and could not give convenient accommodation desired. It was therefore decided that it would be necessary that a new Church, to fit in architecturally and functionally, with the newly created surroundings, must be planned for.

In February, 1953, the final services were held in the old structure and the work of demolition commenced. Since that time morning services have been held in the Lord Dufferin School, and evening services in the Dixon Hall, while the two houses immediately west of the Church site have been used for Sunday School and mid-week activities. As seems to be inevitable, the work of preparing plans which would be satisfactory too some months, but they were finally agreed to be the congregation, the Toronto Home Missions Council and the Toronto East Presbytery. Work started upon the site early in December, 1953, but severe weather as well as building restrictions, made progress very slow. Since the advent of more favorable weather conditions, development has been very rapid, and our members have watched the rising walls with increasing enthusiasm. The hopes of the past few years are gradually being realized, and by the early Fall our congregation will be settling down in their new Church Home.

The Officials of Oak United Church would like to express their deep appreciation of the cooperation received from the Toronto Home Missions Council, whose members have given much time and wisdom to the work of planning this Church. We would also pay our tribute to the work of the Architects, Messrs. Parrot, Tambling and Witmer, and to the contractors, J. S. Laxton and Son, a symbol of whose excellent craftsmanship is before you in this building.

*S. H. Robinson*

CEREMONY OF THE LAYING OF THE FOUNDATION STONE  
Of the new Church Edifice.  
May 1st. 1954, 3 p.m.

The Call to Worship: Rev. Fred Smith.  
Dearly beloved in the Lord, we are gathered together here to  
lay the foundation stone of a building which we humbly trust  
may in due time be consecrated as a house of God.

Hymn: O God of Bethel, by whose hand  
Thy people still are fed;  
Who through this weary pilgrimage  
Hast all our fathers led:

Our vows, our prayers, we now present  
Before Thy throne of grace;  
God of our fathers, be the God  
Of their succeeding race.

Through each perplexing path of life  
Our wandering footsteps guide;  
Give us each day our daily bread,  
And raiment fit provide.

O spread Thy covering wings around,  
Till all our wanderings cease,  
And at our Father's loved abode  
Our souls arrive in peace.

Such blessings from Thy gracious hand  
Our humble prayers implore;  
And Thou shalt be our chosen God,  
And portion evermore. AMEN.

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians, 3; 9-16. Mr. Vaughan D. Blueman,  
Clerk of Session.

Historical Statement. Rev. J. C. Torrance,  
Secretary, Toronto Home Missions Council.

Statement from the Building Committee. Mr. S. H. Robinson,  
Chairman, Oak Church Building Committee.

Prayer: Rev. Ray McCleary,  
Chairman, Toronto East Presbytery.

Greetings: Rev. Father Pashler, St. Bartholomew's Church.  
Captain John Horton, The Salvation Army.  
Mr. R. S. Mills, Q.C., Chairman, Board of Directors,  
The Toronto Home Missions Council.  
Rev. M. C. Macdonald, D.D., The Board of Home Missions.  
Controller David Balfour, Regent Park Housing Commission.

Responsive Reading:

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Rev. H. S. Cobb,  
Minister, St. Enoch's United Church.

Minister: Except the Lord build the house, their labour is but lost  
that build it. Our help is in the Name of the Lord.

People: Who hath made Heaven and Earth.

Minister: O how amiable are Thy dwellings; Thou Lord of hosts.

People: My soul hath a desire and longing to enter into the courts  
of the Lord; My heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.

Minister: Yea, the sparrow hath found her an house, and the swallow  
a nest where she may lay her young; even Thy altars, O Lord  
of hosts, my King and my God.

People: Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house; They will be always  
praising Thee.

Minister: Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee, in whose heart  
are Thy ways.

People: Who going through the vale of misery use it for a well:  
and the pools are filled with water.

Minister: They will go from strength to strength; and unto the God of Gods  
appeareth every one of them in Zion.

People: O Lord of hosts, hear my prayer; hearken, O God of Jacob.

Minister: Behold, O God our defender; and look upon the face of Thine  
anointed.

People: For one day in Thy courts is better than a thousand.

Minister: I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God; than to  
dwell in the tents of ungodliness.

People: For the Lord God is a light and defence: The Lord will give  
grace and worship, and no good thing shall He withhold from  
them that live a godly life.

Minister: O Lord God of hosts: blessed is the man that putteth his  
trust in Thee.

People: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end. AMEN.

Statement of Contents of Copper Box, and the Placing of the Box in the  
Foundation Stone.

The Presentation of the Trowel.

Mr. J. S. Laxton,  
The Contractor.

The Laying of the Foundation Stone.

Rev. E. C. Hunter, D.D.,  
President, Toronto Conference,  
The United Church of Canada.

Responsive Dedication:

Minister: For a building of which Jesus Christ will be the chief Corner Stone, the pillar and ground of the Truth;

People: WE LAY THIS FOUNDATION STONE.

Minister: For a building within whose walls shall be exalted the ministry of the open Bible, with its proclamation of the redeeming grace of God, through Jesus Christ, its message of warning and inspiration, challenge and comfort;

People: WE LAY THIS FOUNDATION STONE.

Minister: For a building within whose walls our boys and girls shall be taught the Christian way of life, and have revealed to them the Christian resources for life's testings and temptations, as they come to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour,

People: WE LAY THIS FOUNDATION STONE.

Minister: For a building within whose walls the weary may find rest, the tempted find strength, the lonely find fellowship; where the careless may be awakened, where all who sin may find forgiveness, where those who mourn may find comfort, where the eager-hearted may find avenues of service,

People: WE LAY THIS CORNER STONE, AND GIVE THANKS UNTO GOD FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW.

The Doxology will be sung by all.

THE LAYING OF THE STONE.

"In the faith of Jesus Christ, we place this stone  
in this Foundation: In the Name of the Father, and  
of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" AMEN.

The Prayer of Dedication.

Rev. Fred Smith.

The Hymn:

Christ is made the sure foundation,  
Christ the head and corner stone,  
Chosen of the Lord, and precious,  
Binding all the Church in one,  
Holy Zion's help for ever,  
And her confidence alone.

To this temple, where we call Thee,  
Come, O Lord of hosts, to-day;  
With Thy wonted loving-kindness  
Hear Thy servants, as they pray,  
And Thy fullest benediction  
Shed within its walls alway.

Laud and honour to the Father,  
Laud and honour to the Son,  
Laud and honour to the Spirit,  
Ever Three and ever One,  
One in might, and One in glory,  
While unending ages run.

AMEN.

The Benediction.

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Dr. Hunter.