



Unionville Presbyterian Community Church (UPC)

600 Village Parkway, Unionville, Ontario L3R 6C2

Profile Narrative

September 2022

Our Vision

Striving to be defined
by the love of Jesus Christ
in all that we do.

Our Mission

To reach out to each other and the world with God's love and grace, acting to make a difference by ministering and supporting both the immediate neighbourhood of Markham-Unionville and beyond, regardless of faith or cultural background, age, gender identity or sexual orientation



Our Values

The SILK values that reflect who we want to be as a church in the community of Unionville / Markham:

- **Service:** serving each other and the community
- **Inclusion:** recognizing that God's love is not confined, but is an unconditional love
- **Love:** striving to demonstrate God's love in all we do
- **Kindness:** it is in kindness towards each other and those we meet that the love takes root in all our lives



Who We Are

It is our desire and intention to be known as a Community Church – reaching out into the hearts and lives of people within the immediate community and beyond with compassion, care, hope and love.

Jesus calls us to love our neighbours.



Worship:

- UPC's English-language Sunday worship service is relaxed and comfortable, following an inclusive theological approach relevant to our everyday lives.
- As part of our Mandarin Ministry, a Mandarin-speaking worship service is held each Sunday.
- Joint English-Mandarin services are held periodically.
- We share our building resources with a sister church, Celebration Presbyterian Church ("CPC"), an English-speaking Chinese congregation. We hold occasional joint services with CPC.
- Lay people participate in services regularly and sometimes lead the worship.
- During the pandemic UPC pivoted immediately to offer live streamed worship services via Zoom.



Music plays a significant part in our worship services. The choir is an enthusiastic group of singers who share their talents regularly. Our classically trained and accomplished music director leads the choir and guest musicians and provides piano solos. Members of the congregation often share their musical talents for special occasions.

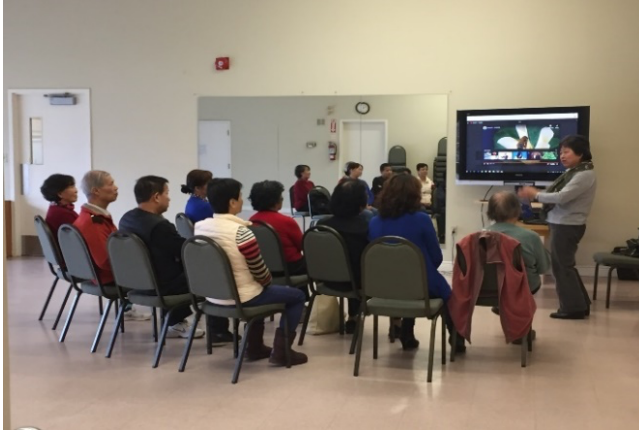
Fostering Faith:

- Saturday morning faith exploration
- Wednesday Evening Advent video & discussion
- Zoom series on the 10 Commandments
- "Living the Questions" video series
- Weekly Bible Study and lunch with the Minister



Children and Youth Ministry:

In prior years UPC offered a successful Sunday school and summer camp for children 12 and under in the community. Moving forward, we are hopeful that we can work with our partners (Mandarin and CPC) to nurture and encourage participation of the younger people in our community.



Mandarin Ministry:

In the spirit of inclusivity, the congregation made a commitment to develop a Mandarin Ministry. Currently vacant, the position of Mandarin leadership is secured by our Mandarin speaking Church Administrator.

Fellowship:

Coffee Time follows Sunday worship. We are a social people who value this time. Occasionally, a soup and roll or potluck lunch is organized.

A variety of occasional fellowship events are held throughout the year, either at the church or in a member's home. Activities include events such as: Games Nights, Robbie Burns Supper, dinner and movie discussion night, Canada Day BBQ.



The Joy of Being Together:

The 'ENJOY' Group (Embracing • Nurturing • Just • Older • Youth) meets weekly for a served lunch and lively conversation, sometimes with a specific topic and sometimes just to chat. Two ENJOY groups meet ; an English-speaking and a Mandarin-speaking group. During the pandemic, meals were prepared and delivered hot to participants who lived alone. **"Take-a-Break"** meets quarterly for a served lunch and fellowship followed by cards and board games. This is often held around a special theme, such as at Christmas time, Valentine's Day, Halloween.

The Care Network:

The Care Network provides ongoing support and pastoral care to the people of the congregation. The network is a group of volunteer Care Leaders who offer to provide reactive support in times of crisis and proactive connection to grow bonds of caring and fellowship. The vision is: to build a vital, compassionate, caring community of faith. The Care Network is also meant as a support for the minister in their pastoral care ministry. Our Mandarin-speaking congregants share updates and concerns through social media.



Social Justice Ministries:



Indigenous People:

UPC has made a commitment to further social justice among Indigenous people and to implement the recommendations of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission.

UPC volunteers have been trained and regularly provide KAIROS Blanket Exercises that teach the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada. On Orange Shirt Day, we honour the children of residential schools and their families.

Refugee Support: Through the Presbyterian Church, a young Iraqi refugee and an Afghan refugee family, both with ties to family in this area, are being sponsored by UPC. UPC has also helped refugee families and individuals in our own and neighbouring communities.

UPC Anti-Racism Group has been formed at UPC to explore possibilities to change attitudes and address racism amongst ourselves, in our community and beyond.

Presbyterian World Service and Development: UPC's congregation has given financial support to many humanitarian causes over the years. Contributing to the work of PWS&D allows us to assist in many crisis situations throughout the world.

Community Connections

UPC's Hope in Action Fund is a source of financial support that is available to be used to enhance the life and mission ministries within the congregation and beyond.

UPC Adult ESL Conversation Program is attended by mainly Mandarin-speaking participants and has run successfully for 10 years. Classes are led by UPC volunteers and offered free of charge.



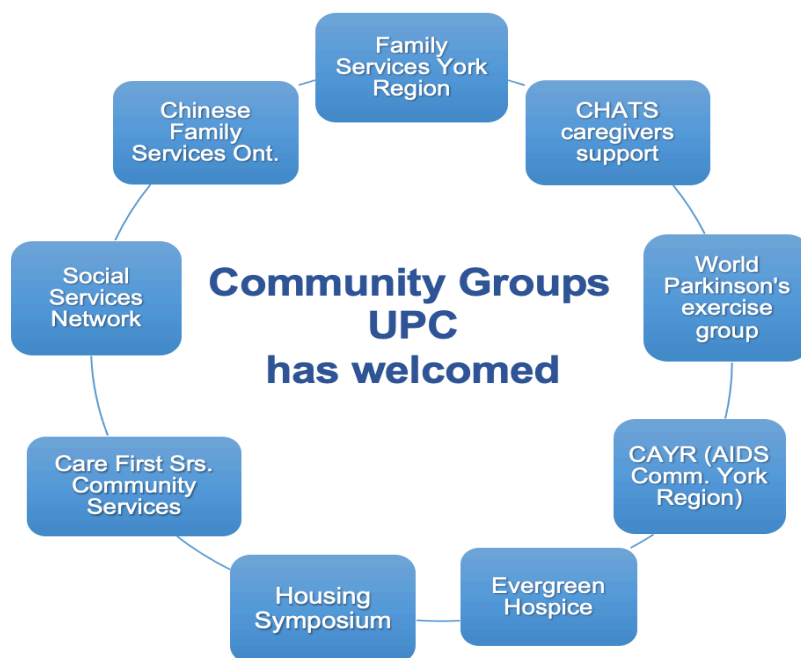
First Nations: *Hope In Action* supports First Nations people with projects being defined annually. In addition, this year UPC supported the Mennonite Central Ontario Committee that operates a food sovereignty project, providing small greenhouses and seeds through the Indigenous Neighbours Program. Money was given to purchase seeds to plant crops that would prosper in their climate zone. We also sent funds to support their children.

Community Connections cont'd...

UPC Supports Community Agencies:

- provides regular worship services and music for residents at community long-term care facilities and seniors' residences
- maintains a special relationship with several community agencies with whom we have partnered for many years to help serve some of the most vulnerable adults and young people in our community
- during the pandemic, provided support for essential workers in hospitals and long-term care, and for our most vulnerable community members.

Under the *Hope in Action* umbrella, UPC strives to provide a **Ministry of Presence** to the community and UPC groups meeting at the church by being welcoming and offering hospitality. The following are some of the groups we have welcomed:



Our Facility

We have a modern church building set on a large plot of land adjoining a city park. In the past there has been plenty of room for an active church camp featuring water slides, running through sprinklers and races. There are raised vegetable gardens and lots of room for yard sales. There is ample parking, with designated handicap spots.



There is a main floor sanctuary, church hall, nursery, meeting room, and separate offices for the administrator and minister. We are blessed with a flexible sanctuary that can seat about 120 people and can be reconfigured to accommodate varied activities, e.g. workshops and community activities.



When the pandemic kept people away from the church building, we kept our spirits strong and we knew the time was right to undertake major renovations including:

- completely renovating the kitchen
- converting the bathrooms to family friendly and gender-neutral, individual private stalls
- installing a comprehensive audio-visual system that allows for onsite audio and video recording as well as live streaming to enable us to regularly provide hybrid services simultaneously onsite and offsite
- renovating the administrative office
- installing security cameras
- retrofitting almost all the lighting to LED, both inside and outside the building
- making major revisions to the plumbing, electrical, painting, insulation, etc.
- repainting parking lot markings, designating specific disabled parking areas



UPC provides attractive, well-appointed rental space for numerous community groups.

UPC Manse

In 2018 the congregation purchased a newer, modern manse on a quiet street, opposite a park, about a 15 minute drive east of the church. It's a 3+1 bedroom, detached two-storey home, with a newly finished basement and double car garage. It is within walking distance to schools, parks, community centre, library and hospital.



UPC Background

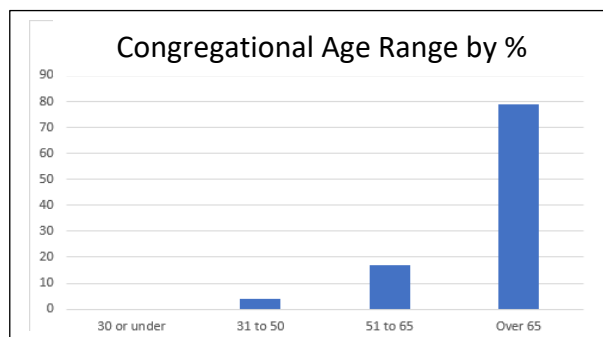
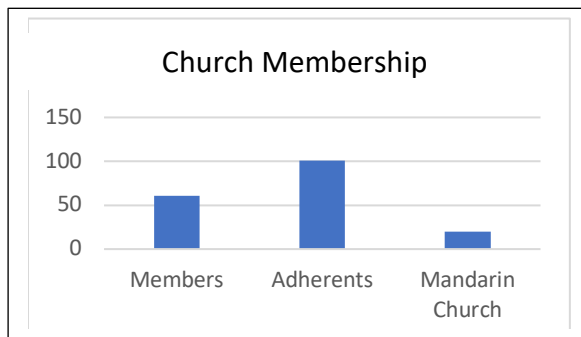
September 2022

The Presbyterian Church in Canada had an early presence in Unionville with its first location on Unionville's Main Street. That early church closed in 1926. In the early 1980's, the need for and the opportunity to again establish a Presbyterian congregation in Unionville took hold.



After a good deal of work by East Toronto Presbytery and interested people, some of whom are still part of our congregation, a Minister was appointed and the door knocking began. A manse and a future building lot were purchased, and the congregation was formally established in the fall of 1984. UPC met in a local school and a library until our present building was completed in 1990.

Nestled in the historic village of Unionville, which is part of the City of Markham, a multicultural mix of people have settled in the homes surrounding the church over the years. The end of the British lease of Hong Kong in 1997 led many Cantonese speakers to relocate to Canada and to Unionville in particular. The next wave of immigration was from mainland China and are Mandarin speaking.



UPC Present & Future

September 2022

The Path Forward

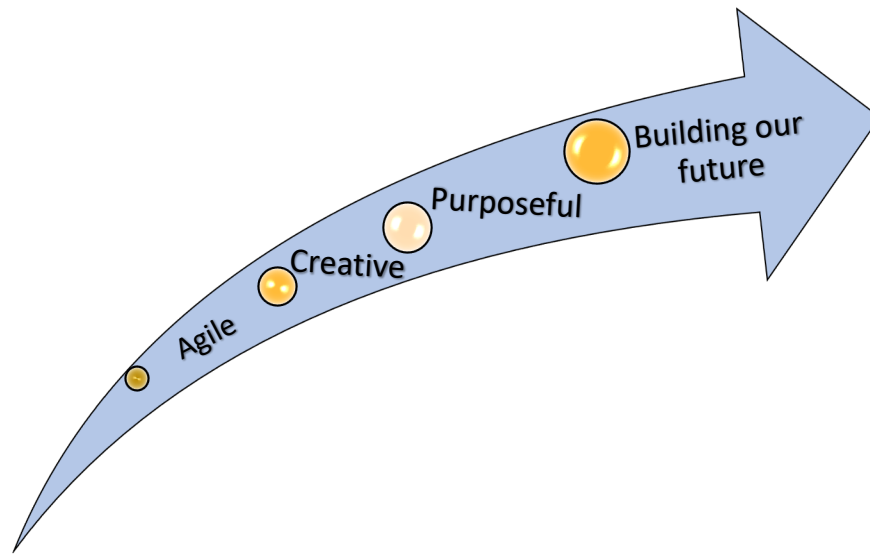
Being a church in the 21st century has been further complicated by the challenges of the global pandemic, but UPC has only strengthened its resolve to thrive. *“The deep desire for connection has not gone away... we are hardwired for community... and spirituality.”* (Global Report 2022)

Built into our Mission and Values is a recognition that for UPC to thrive, we must be an agile church, creative in all aspects of our ministries. We are seeking a Minister to help us build on our strengths.



UPC's Strengths – Taking Us to Our Future

September 2022



Our Mission, Vision and Values guide how we build our future

Our financial management strengthens our ability to be flexible & responsive

Our new audio-visual system extends our reach to members & visitors

We have a strong music ministry led by our talented music director

We belong to & support a network of local social service community groups

Our facility serves as a hub for our programs & rental use by the community

We have a core membership prepared to take us to new heights of service

We are committed to practicing diversity, equity and inclusion.

Ideally, the person who will lead the people of UPC will possess most of the following pastoral skills and interests:

- personable, approachable, compassionate and a good listener.
- excellent communicator with progressive faith views
- a contemporary, thoughtful interpretation of the scriptures and the ability to demonstrate their relevance to the 21st century
- desire to embrace the Vision, Mission, and Values of this congregation
- ability to inspire people
- openness to a team approach and ability to develop leadership
- excited about ministry within a diverse, inclusive congregation
- ability to work with a range of age groups and understand the unique needs of each
- willingness to collaborate closely with lay pastors in the Mandarin Ministry and the minister of Celebration Presbyterian Church
- willingness to be involved in church life beyond the Sunday service
- interest in connecting with the community
- interest in broadening our music program
- a sense of humour

Contact:

Interim Moderator: Rev. Joan Masterton

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Phone: 416-992-4901

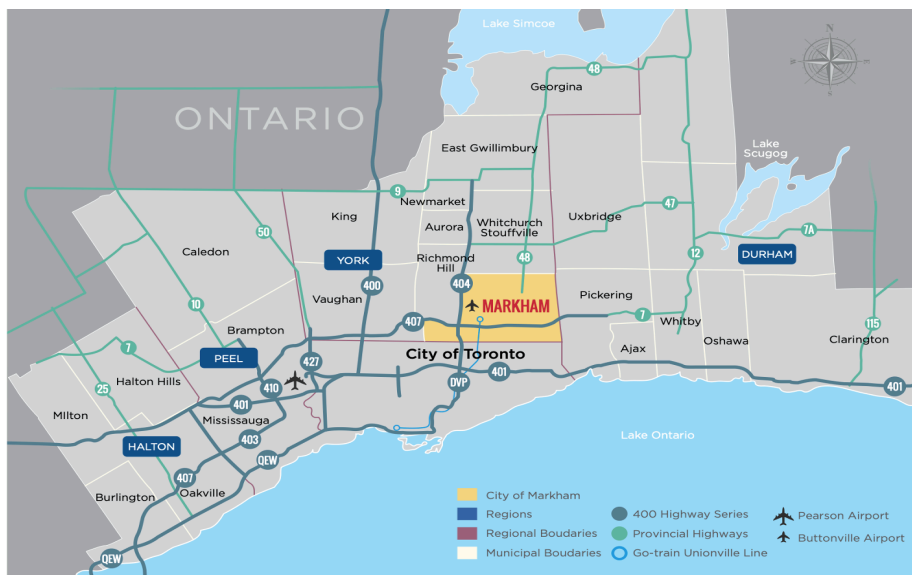
Appendix

UPC – September 2022



Markham is located in the Greater Toronto Area

Population in 2016: 328,940



Markham Demographics based on 2016 Statistics Canada Census

AGE OF POPULATION

Over half of all the residents (51%) are over 40 years of age, with most (36%) being within the 40-64 age group.

	Number	Percent
Total Population	328,940	100
0-4 years	17,045	5
5-9 years	19,065	6
10-19 years	40,310	12
20-29 years	42,645	13
30-39 years	40,770	12
40-64 years	119,170	36
65+ years or more	49,960	15

LANGUAGE, MOTHER TONGUE

The most frequently spoken mother tongue languages after our official languages of French and English (37%) were Cantonese (23%) and Mandarin (13%).

	Number	Percent
Total Population (single responses)	313,575	100
English	114,280	36
Cantonese	72,630	23
Mandarin	41,835	13
Tamil	14,645	5
Persian (Farsi)	7,310	2
French	1,930	1
Other	52,235	16

RELIGIONS

Within the 60% of the population who reported a religious affiliation, the largest percentage was Christian (32%). Almost half (40%) of Ward 8 residents reported no religious affiliation.

	Number	Percent
Total Population (in private households)	45,726	100
Christian	14,792	32
Hindu	4,862	11
Buddhist	3,746	8
Muslim	2,621	6
Sikh	775	2
Jewish	<1	<1
Other	170	<1
Not religious affiliation	18,135	40

**Please note that information about religion is only collected once every 10 years. Data displayed in the religion table above from the 2011 National Household Survey.*