

YONGE STREET MISSION



PRAYER
FOR THE
CITY

AUG. 17

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BY: DAVID ADCOCK,
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THE HEALING TOUCH

Matthew 8: 1-3

*M*atthew paints a little vignette of an encounter between Jesus and a leper. The leper kneels before Jesus and asks for healing but with a qualifier, “If you choose, you can make me clean.” Jesus reaches out to touch him and simply says, “I do choose. Be healed.” Matthew records that immediately the man’s leprosy is healed.

Why would the leper doubt Christ’s willingness to heal and restore?

The leper was under a double burden. Not only was he in need of healing but the culture and theology of the time told him that sickness was closely linked with sin and was an external expression of an inner evil in his life.

Everything this leper had learned would have told him that he was unworthy of healing and beyond the scope of God’s love and that he didn’t even have the right to speak to a public figure like Jesus.

Jesus sensed this tentativeness and physically reached out to him. In word and deed he was moving against culture and was, in effect, saying to the leper. “You are worthy of

God's interest and concern. You do have a place in the community. You do have standing and you do belong."

We all encounter folk who have been told or who think they are not smart enough, not articulate enough, not witty enough, not attractive enough. Just not enough! Our invitation is to follow Christ into our world and discover the leprosy that we are called to heal and to daily ask Christ for eyes to see and ears to hear.

At Yonge Street Mission we have the privilege of such opportunities; our staff and volunteers welcome community members who often have been pushed to the edges of life and who, like the man in this story, feel they don't even have a right to speak their dreams for health and a future. *Prayer For The City* is an invitation for you to join us in this incredible adventure of following Christ in our city. Pray weekly for YSM, for our people and for discernment to know how you can provide the healing touch for others in your life.

May you know the peace and presence of Christ in a felt way in the months ahead.

With every blessing
and much peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David", with a large, sweeping flourish above the name.

David

*Prayer for the City is written by
Mission directors and staff.*

*They are like trees planted along the riverbank,
bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither,
and they prosper in all they do.*

Psalm 1:3

As a new staff member joins the team this summer in our St. James Town satellite location, please pray that they are quickly rooted in the community. Building trust and rapport with residents is critical to the work done in the neighbourhood.

Pray that staff are spiritually strong and healthy; indeed, that they are like trees that bear fruit and prosper in the witness of their presence. The strongest trees are the ones with the deepest roots and deep roots require hours and hours of conversation – both listening and learning. May new staff have the ears to hear all that they need to hear.

During this week in August, planning is well underway for the fall. Pray that as program plans are made, wise local leaders will initiate conversations and participate in the planning. As we partner with local churches and schools, pray for strong relationships and careful considerate planning.

Praise God for all the good things that have taken place in the last year and that lie ahead in 2009 for St. James Town.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

2 Corinthians 13:13

Almost every department of YSM offers camps throughout the summer. Give thanks and praise to God for the finances that have come forth to make these camps a reality. Pray for each person at camp to see the face of Jesus Christ in each other by His grace, mercy, love and fellowship.

Pray for each person who attends Yonge Street Mission camps and all in leadership and behind the scenes to be formed throughout the summer as an instrument of His peace:

Where there is hatred, let each person sow love,
Where there is injury, pardon,
Where there is doubt, faith,
Where there is despair, hope,
Where there is darkness, light,
Where there is sadness, joy,
Where there is fear, comfort,
Where there is loneliness, fellowship,
Where there is exhaustion, His strength,
Where there is world-weariness, pray for safety,
fun and refreshment in the power of the Holy Spirit!

O Divine Master, grant that each person who is involved in Yonge Street Mission camps may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, not so much to be understood as to understand, not so much to be loved, as to love!

Adapted from the prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi.

'Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.'

Matthew 19:14

It is time to return to routine. Children and parents breathe a sigh of regret for the end of camps and a sigh of relief for a return to what is predictable.

Many children in our community are affected significantly by conflict in war-torn parts of the world, having fled recently with their families for this safer, more peaceful country. This year our Tamil children lived in anxiety and fear over what was happening to beloved friends and family at home in Sri Lanka. Our families from Afghanistan worry endlessly about their sisters, aunts and cousins. As children gear up for the academic year, our staff reflect on what emotional supports they will need and how to create a sense of stability amidst chaos.

What is remarkable is the way in which children connect across cultural divides. What might be unthinkable in their home country is a natural flow amongst cultures in our setting. Staff model how much we value one another's traditions, differences, geography and history. In our homework club, children study various regions of the world and learn to celebrate foods and activities from other countries.

Pray that this spirit of celebration of our different histories will overflow at the Mission into our wider community. Pray that children will have the support they need to excel and reach their potential, despite the challenges faced in their home countries and in adapting to their new homes. Pray for creativity and insight for staff and volunteers to model well and deeply love each child. Amen.

September marks the 10th anniversary of the 310 Centre, home to our Double Take Store and Computer Literacy Centre – an expansion project deepening our roots into the Regent Park community. Many blessings have flowed from this building over the ten years, and we offer a prayer of gratitude for the wisdom of YSM’s leadership. It was a risk to purchase a former grocery store and transform it into a centre of excellence.

Over 1,400 children from low-income families have earned their own computer through our computer literacy program. One young graduate best described the doors opened by our computer lab: *“These computer skills will be helpful, no matter what we choose to do. Some of us might go on to be teachers, computer technicians or even dancers – but whatever we do we will be better at it because of what we have learned at the YSM computer lab.”*

Double Take, in serving the Mission’s community for a decade, has grown into a department store stocked with clothing, furniture and household items. Thanks to our wonderful donors, it is known for good quality at low prices. But another purpose of the store is to create jobs and job skills opportunities. Close to 200 people, mainly recent immigrants, have graduated from Double Take’s training program and entered the Canadian workforce.

Please offer a prayer for the very many children and adults who will continue to be blessed by the Mission’s work at 310.

Each year we gear up for another exciting time at the Mission: FALL! Perhaps it is the school year starting again that gets us revved up for our many activities and programs. Maybe it is the cooler weather that fosters us getting together with renewed energies and creativity to work with our community.

In fall we embrace the energies of many who are new volunteers and welcome back the familiar faces of volunteers already a part of our family.

We thank God for our volunteers, their contributions and their willingness to do God's work here with YSM. We celebrate all who feel called to become a long-term part of our vibrant life-giving work and we esteem those who take part in a shorter commitment.

*GOD, investigate my life; get all the facts firsthand.
I'm an open book to you;
even from a distance, you know what I'm thinking.
You know when I leave and when I get back;
I'm never out of your sight.
You know everything I'm going to say
before I start the first sentence.
I look behind me and you're there,
then up ahead and you're there, too—
your reassuring presence, coming and going.
This is too much, too wonderful—
I can't take it all in!*

Psalm 139: 1-6

Sherry is a delightful young woman, always cheerful and pleasant. She is stably housed in supportive housing and has a part-time job that provides her with sufficient money to meet her needs. She isn't heavily involved in the drugs and drama of street life.

When asked, "What next?" her response was, "I'd like to go to school."

"That's a great goal," replied the staff member.

"Except I can't read," Sherry responded.

"Would you let me help you learn to read?"

"Sure!" was the off-hand reply.

Illiteracy is a scourge affecting many young people who manage to bluff their way through lower grades and become behavioural problems later on when faking it becomes impossible. Illiteracy makes them believe they are not smart enough to learn; that there is something wrong with them; that life is unfair. Their way of coping is to take to the streets, away from frustrated parents who are unaware of the problem.

At Evergreen, staff gain the trust of young people like Sherry so that they can sit with her to assess her abilities, refer her to literacy programs if that is appropriate or perhaps simply work with her a little bit each day to help her begin the process of learning anew.

Please pray for staff at Evergreen as they attempt to assist youth with the difficult task of learning for the first time what they may have been taught many times before.

I met Jesus today
He was sleeping in a doorway
Beside Him an empty bottle lay
He didn't have much to say

I saw Jesus downtown
On the street corner, hanging around
Muscling for territory ground
Tattoo'd on His arm was a crown

I did time with Jesus in jail
Always too poor to ever get bail
Sometimes He is for sale
Spends most His days brewing ale

I heard Jesus scream
Terrorized by bad dreams
Does what He hates to escape that scene
Now it's a battle to get clean

I saw Jesus cry
As He was waving goodbye
Singing some childhood lullaby
Going to the nursing home to die

JESUS, EVERYWHERE
JESUS, ALL THE TIME
JESUS IN US ALL
JESUS, YOURS AND MINE

OH LORD HAVE MERCY

By Rev. Jan Rothenburger

O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures for ever.

Psalm 107:1

In Canada, we traditionally give thanks for the harvest in early October when farmers reap what they have sown that year. Most of us are disconnected from that rural setting and celebrate the harvest of blessings – food, family, friends and a warm comfortable home.

Our first Canadian Thanksgiving took place in 1578 when English explorer Martin Frobisher, who had been trying to find a northern passage to the Orient, arrived in what is now Newfoundland. He gave thanks for surviving the long journey.

At the Mission, we give thanks that so many of our community members have survived their long journey. When some visit the Mission, they may see the incredible need and challenges faced by much of our community. However, there is wonderful blessing and richness too.

Please give thanks for:

- The great spirit of many of our community members who persevere through challenges to create new opportunities for themselves and better the lives of their children;
- The diversity of cultural background that enriches all of our lives and our understanding of the world and for a spirit of celebration of that diversity amongst people from so many different countries;
- The sense of hope and moments of wonderful news for community members as they develop new skills, find work, graduate from school or programs, raise well-adjusted children or win scholarships.

Amen indeed.

Awesome and wondrous God!

That's how the prayer began.

"I like that," said the youth. "I really like that."

Who knew that an address to God would spark such interest in a non-church attending, Evergreen youth or where it might lead her on her journey of informal and unacknowledged faith?

Yet from her face it was evident that the choice of words had sparked a reflection about who God is and how we relate to God.

In contrast, a minister asked, "Do they hear the gospel preached? Do they make a commitment to Christ?"

Our standard response most days is, "We preach the gospel daily and sometimes we use words."

At Evergreen, where youth find it difficult to trust anyone, especially anyone connected to formalized religion, we are careful about the way in which we engage youth spiritually. Preferring to demonstrate God's love and grace rather than talk about it, we journey with youth, listening to their fears and pain, celebrating their every accomplishment. Aware that many young people come to us with a perception of the divine that vaguely resembles the judgemental parents they left behind, we do our best to introduce them to the reality of God as LOVE.

Pray for staff at Evergreen, that they may all continue preaching the gospel of God's love to youth, with or without words.

Pray for youth that they may see, hear, experience, absorb – and come to trust an awesome and wondrous God.

“Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.” The woman said, “I know that Messiah (called Christ) is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” Then Jesus declared, “I who speak to you am he.”

John 4: 23-26

We serve an amazing God, so profoundly loving and caring towards all. When we worship God we have an opportunity to encounter God together, to touch and be touched by the power of His great love.

At Church at the Mission, our worship services encourage people towards hands-on worship, be it through playing percussion instruments as they worship, painting and sketching, waving banners or worship-streamers or just dancing before the Lord as an act of worship. All these are creative expressions of worship that engage the whole person and help to move us toward active participation and engagement in the worship of God.

Please pray for the worship life of the Mission as a whole and for all who participate in Church at the Mission.

Pray that we would worship God in spirit and in truth, that we would meet with Jesus Christ, that we would be touched and healed and cleansed by the power of His love, and by the power of His blood shed for us.

The kind of fasting I want is this: Remove the chains of oppression and the yoke of injustice, and let the oppressed go free.

Isaiah 58: 6

Young people in our community often feel the chains of poverty and do not feel free to choose a path for themselves that will lead to wholeness. So it is a delight this week to celebrate the achievements of young people who have chosen the path of post-secondary education and have received a YSM scholarship to help with the financial burden.

Pray for strength and courage for scholarship recipients, many of whom have overcome difficult obstacles in their young lives. Some are alone with no family support. Some are parents themselves. Others have struggled to adapt to a new language and a new country. Some have battled to make a life away from the street.

Pray for all who support the Mission's Bright Lights event this week. Ask that funds will be raised to enable young people to pursue their dreams of higher education, not only for this year but for years to come. Bless all who help provide young people with a way out of poverty and the freedom to choose a path of hope.

He will free the poor one who calls to him, and those who need help,

He will have pity on the poor and feeble, and save the lives of those in need.

Their lives will be precious in his sight.

Psalm 72: 12-14

A chastening experience, to encounter genuine humility and thankfulness in another. We learn so much from others whose eyes seem open to an appreciation of what truly matters. The faith and wisdom of others can come from the most surprising source.

Many times at Genesis Place, a tenant with little in the way of prestige, power, or book learning demonstrates depths of faith. He may express the privilege enjoyed in joining with others in a meal, a celebration or a prayer. A staff member may be singled out with a thank you card or a scrawled note on a scrap of paper. Or a quiet thank you is spoken.

The Psalm reminds us that the lives of the poor and people in need will be precious in God's sight, and this is a belief we cling to at Genesis Place. Poverty can grind away at a person's capacity to appreciate, to offer thanks. But seeds of gentle hope abide among the poorest.

Pray with us that our hearts remain open to listen to what the poor can teach us.

Pray that tenants and community members may truly know that their lives are precious in the eyes of God.

THANK YOU

Your prayers and support mean so much to this community.

“Thank you again for this opportunity. I cannot even put into words the balm it is for my weariness.”

(Seniors Bible Study)

“I felt challenged today to walk the walk and cleave to God through my difficulties.”

(Church at the Mission)

“Evergreen was the first place I ever went in my life where I felt accepted. I never would have got off drugs without their help. Now I live on my own and support myself.”

(Evergreen)



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