

YONGE STREET MISSION



PRAYER  
FOR THE  
CITY

AUG. 16  
20

NOV. 7  
10

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MISSION MINISTRY OFFICER



# INTEGRITY:

*We strive for transparency and truth in who we are, what we say and how we behave.*

*Many proclaim themselves loyal, but who can find one worthy of trust? The righteous walk in integrity – happy are the children who follow them!*

Proverbs 20: 6 - 7

**I**ntegrity is not a quality that Yonge Street Mission community members encounter regularly. Truth and transparency aren't often part of their reality. The people around them, because of their own inability to trust, frequently keep secrets and are evasive in their efforts to protect themselves. Similarly, authorities, whether social workers, police, or others, often give only partial explanations about what is happening which leads the community members to suspect that information is being hidden from them and they are not being told the truth.

That is why staff at YSM are so careful always to be truthful and transparent with community members with whom they interact.

They do this, not only because as Christians it is the right thing to do, but also because they are endeavouring to help community members learn to trust.

Trust is an essential ingredient to a happy life. For only if people can trust those around them and the world they live in can they function without fear, without anxiety, without suspicion.

We believe that if we can help people learn to trust by being absolutely transparent and truthful with them, then we can enable them to live in the world with a greater sense of confidence and peace. Only when they feel safe and secure can community members risk venturing out into the world beyond to achieve a happier and more fulfilling life. Only when they can trust that people are being genuine with them can they begin to think of making positive changes in their lives like going back to school, or applying for a job, or looking for an apartment.

As you pray through the ‘prayers for the city’ that follow, please pray for all with whom we journey that they might experience the confidence and security that being treated with integrity can bring.

Many blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'K' and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Karen

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

A number of families from our Daycare have recently returned from Camp Endobanah after a week of fun, rest, and experiencing nature. It was an opportunity for both intergenerational and cross-cultural bonding as families of different type and origin came together and built community.

Fishing, hiking, swimming, crafts, campfires, barbeques, games, canoeing and sports are among the many activities that took place during the week. It was wonderful to see everyone from a 5-month-old infant to a 60-plus grandmother participating, each contributing in their own way.

Camp provides a chance for families to get out of the city and have a vacation when most would not be able to afford one. Many of our families are struggling to make ends meet due to bad economic times and circumstance. Pray for the families that their financial needs are met and they are able to gain some form of financial security.

Some of our families are recent immigrants to Canada and had to leave behind their family and support networks. Pray that the bonds created at camp can grow and build as they create community here in a new country.

Parents with children can live under a lot of stress. Pray that the time at camp rejuvenates our families and strengthens positive family relationships.

Early in the summer, Community Services held our 5th Annual International Fashion Show, entitled “Free to Be Me”. This show had 100 models representing all our programs – from toddlers to some of our oldest seniors – wearing clothing from all over the world as well as from our DoubleTake store. Everyone was proud to be part of this wonderful event.

The theme of “free to be me” is one that was close to the heart of Jesus, who always had time for people on the margins. He recognized their inherent beauty and goodness. He wants us to be free to be who He created us to be and to know that we are loved. It is one of the marvellous privileges of working at Yonge Street Mission that we get to walk alongside people and practise this law of love.

Please pray for the many events at YSM that affirm and showcase the talents and humanity of our community.

Pray for volunteers and staff that we will have energy, creativity, patience and wisdom as we plan for the months ahead.

Pray for our community members that they will become free to be who they are meant to be. In Christ’s name, Amen.

First steps are always the hardest ones to take. They dance along a trapeze of fear, excitement, anxiety...all with the hope that it leads to something so beautiful, it's worth risking everything for. Such were the feelings of the interns during the early weeks on Evergreen's Summer Team.

These first steps brought a sea of new faces and names to learn. Names and faces of bold and brilliant youth, all too often passed off as nameless and faceless. They are the talented, the brilliant, the gifted and the dreamers. They are the sons of mothers and the daughters of fathers. They are students of life, artists, lovers, poets and comedians.

Our interns met youth who have the potential to radically change our society but find the door closed, locked and boarded-up. In a world that has chewed them up, spit them out and is prepared to do it all over again, they are considered misfits that plague our city streets.

Yet for Evergreen's summer interns, marginalized youth are the hidden pieces to the puzzle of our society. A puzzle that cannot be completed without all the pieces.

Pray that Evergreen's passion and work among the street youth of the downtown core would be contagious. Pray that it would inspire others to join in changing the lives of street youth. Pray for boldness among the youth, that they would step out and walk the line of change.

We are truly blessed at the Mission. Daily we receive an abundance of calls and emails from individuals and groups who want to come and serve the poor by volunteering. Sometimes it is a specific position that they wish to fill or a program they would like to be a part of. Often times when asked where they would like to volunteer their response is simply, “wherever you need me.”

Some stay only for a short period of time and others for decades. They toil quietly in the background, help us to nourish, support, heal and feed our community.

Volunteers enable us to provide services that we could not offer without their help. They expand the scope of what we can provide by sharing their gifts and talents. Finally, they help us to create a community of inclusion, acceptance and love.

As our fall programming begins, please pray for our volunteers and help us to guide and support them as they walk with our community in kindness and compassion.

*Finally, my sisters and brothers, your thoughts should be wholly directed to all that is true, all that deserves respect, all that is honest, pure, decent, admirable, virtuous or worthy of praise. Live according to what you have learned and accepted, what you have heard me say and seen me do. Then will the God of peace be with you.*

Philippians 4:8

*“There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.”*

Galatians 3:28

Ties of family and friendship link many members of New Hope Fellowship Thursday drop-in. One of our regulars, Elizabeth, informed us one evening that Aloysius, a young member, had died suddenly in his sleep. The news saddened many.

New Hope held a memorial and were able to contact Aloysius’ family members. At the memorial people remembered Aloysius’ gentle manner, wide-ranging knowledge and love for rap music. Photos showed him smiling at New Hope events: camp, Christmas brunch, on trips.

John, Aloysius’ brother, arrived in a well-cut suit, apologizing for his lateness. Elizabeth offered him a hug and said she missed Aloysius. We invited John to say a few words before dinner, and to stay to eat.

Before ninety strangers, he shared movingly and thanked the community for honouring his brother. He stayed for supper, conversing with many. He said he appreciated learning about a part of Aloysius’ life he had not known before.

We show integrity when we act from the truest parts of ourselves. New Hope showed its integrity that evening and drew John into its circle, creating a God-touched moment.

Pray for Aloysius and his family, and for our community members who mourn his loss. Pray that all of us may meet each other honestly and humbly across any differences we may have.

*While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.*

Genesis 8:22

As the temperatures cool and the leaves bring forth their magnificent colours, we pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon this city, Yonge Street Mission and the Church at the Mission. We pray that all will come to believe that each human being is created in God's own image and to know Jesus Christ, His Son. We pray for all eyes to see and all hearts to comprehend that the Word of God is our nourishment and authority.

For many, God's nourishment is literal – through our daily bread. At the Mission, we connect to this daily bread through the meals we provide to those we journey with - children, youth, seniors and adults. Pray for Church at the Mission staff who reach out to people who hunger and thirst for spiritual sustenance through church services, hospital and prison visits, and street ministry.

Gracious Father, we bless You, we give You thanks for the fruits of the earth and for the labours of those who harvest them and bring them to the Yonge Street Mission community. Make us faithful stewards of Your great bounty, for the provision of necessities and the relief of all who are in need, to the glory of Your Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

Hardened by life on the street and the difficulties of their own experiences and circumstances, youth may often seem rough around the edges and unreachable. Their speech may at first seem coarse and harsh, but deep within their tough exterior is an impressionable young person longing for something or someone to hold on to.

Often this ‘something’ involves being entangled in attractive temptations that come from a life on the street. Coupled with this ‘something’ is the longing for someone. This search for someone is where the Evergreen staff are able to gain access. In fact, it is here that an entry point can be established, allowing staff to speak and over time, deeply impact the lives of youth who are alone and adrift.

Prayer is an essential part of this ministry and there is no denying God’s hand at work. At Evergreen physical needs are met first and foremost, but from these personal experiences God’s very personal healing hand is demonstrated as He daily meets the spiritual and emotional needs of the youth.

Please pray specifically for freedom from the bondage of their past and present experiences, that the youth may experience victory over present vices and past traumatic events. Pray for a compassionate and loving heart for staff members as they take on the responsibilities of being Christ’s hands and feet. Pray finally for God’s kingdom to come and God’s will to be done at Evergreen.

Thelma's life had been spent almost entirely on the street. Addiction, prostitution and a history of abuse takes its toll. But Thelma had started a new life in a tiny new basement bachelor apartment – her first ever!

Thelma took us on the grand tour. A tour of the largest castles in Europe could not compare to this tour. The master bedroom (a bed, complete with linen and blankets!), the walk-in closet (a small dresser with a few drawers), the “pantry” (the small metal stand with a few groceries on it), her bookcase (a few books nicely arranged on the hot water heater), her living room (the easy chair, pushed into the corner so we could turn into the “bedroom”), the rec room (a small portable T.V. on top of the dresser), the kitchen complete with a few pots, pans and cooking utensils, the bathroom and then back to the dining room (the table at the end of the bed with two chairs.) She served tea.

“Come here, look at this!”

She went over to her dresser and pulled open one of the small drawers. I looked inside and saw five or six rolled up pairs of socks. I didn't get it. She looked at my bewildered expression and said, “It's a sock drawer! I've never had a sock drawer before. And look - matching socks! All kinds of them!” She was so grateful to have “so much”.

Pray that we would learn to be as grateful as Thelma.

*“I will repay you for the years that the locust has eaten.”*

Joel 2:25

Sarah is a 19-year-old woman who has been using Evergreen's services for a couple of years. She has a daughter who is three years old, and has tried her very best to be a good mother and support to her family despite being trapped in an abusive relationship for awhile with a young man. She endured a long process of court dates, police statements and legal matters because of this situation.

Evergreen staff did whatever they could to support her. Our nursery staff assisted her with services for her daughter when needed. Employment Resource staff encouraged Sarah through times when she felt she had given all she had. In time, we began to see that Sarah's self-confidence was growing. After a long journey, Sarah is beginning to really believe in herself and has returned to school to further her education and provide a strong role model for her young daughter.

Join us in prayer this week for the youth at Evergreen who are trying to find their way through some very tough obstacles including moving away from violent relationships, finding permanent housing, part-time or full-time employment or upgrading their education. It's not an easy road and it can often feel like a lonely one. Pray for staff that they will be able to communicate the hope, guidance, acceptance and compassion that comes from God's abiding love, mercy and grace, so that each day will be one of progress, help and peace.

The past few months have brought changes to our first satellite location in St. James Town. At last we have new office space to call our own – for that we offer prayers of thanksgiving!

Please join us in prayer for:

- Smooth transition, as new faces are added to our staff team. Give thanks for the funding support to be able to develop God's work in the neighbourhood.
- Wisdom for the project team working on preparing and launching our new program called "Future Leaders" for youth in grades 7, 8 and 9. Pray for guidance and creativity in building strong and better relationships with our neighbourhood partners.
- Leadership growth for the women of St James Town. May we know how to resource and support them to achieve their goals for their own lives, families and community.

God grant the St James Town staff team the ability to be people of integrity as they journey alongside the community. May they cultivate an atmosphere of God's presence around them as they go about their daily work and may the community witness a group set apart and committed to working in peace, unity and reconciliation together.

To God be the Glory.

*When hope is crushed, the heart is crushed, but a wish come true fills you with joy.*

Proverbs 13:12

V. J. describes his life before he came to Evergreen: “I didn’t know where I was going to sleep at night or what I would get to eat. My mental state was a blur. Basically I had no hope. I’ve come a long way since then!”

This young man overcame a lot of challenges to get to the place he is in now. He battled addiction. Now he is seeing his “wish come true” as he returns to school and works toward a post-secondary qualification as a youth worker.

This week we celebrate young people like V.J. who have received a YSM Student Award and are actively pursuing their educational dreams. We share their joy as hope is restored.

Please pray for:

Students, that they maintain strength and courage through academic and life challenges;

Mentors, that they support and guide students in all the ways needed;

Supporters of our Bright Lights Gala on October 27, that sufficient funds will be raised for the Student Award Program to continue to offer hope, freedom and a way out of poverty for young people in need.

“I’m face-to-face with a harsh reality, Lord. There is so much that I can offer this hurting world. But where do I start? We are bombarded by hopelessness, homelessness and injustice at every turn. The dividing lines of the rich and the poor are getting thicker, and few seem to care. Too many are satisfied with assuming they know the stories of the homeless they step over and pass by. What do they know- or even care- about how life plays out on the other side of that line?”

“What stops these roles from being reversed? What if I were in their shoes and they in mine? They are my brothers and sisters. I owe them everything I would give myself. In some way, we are each other’s guides to understanding this crazy world we live in. They are my teachers that help me see the bitter sting of the world, the beauty of innocence and the joy in freedom. I owe them respect, not out of sympathy, but out of righteousness, and if nothing more, for the fact that they are created in your image, Lord. You have given us hope, it is our birthright; but teach us to share it with others.”

Pray that all human beings would begin to see the incredible potential that is hidden within every other individual. Pray that justice and righteousness would move people forward into action. Pray that all people would realize that it is more than the ‘haves’ and the ‘have-nots’, but that every human being is created with a purpose and deserves hope.

## THANK YOU

Your faithful prayers are deeply appreciated by YSM staff and community members.

*“I was very angry when I first came to Evergreen. But God surrounded me with angels. I am so grateful for the wisdom and purity of heart I found in the staff. Now I just thank God for what I have received.”*

– young woman from  
Employment Resource Centre

*“I celebrate every day that I found this community at Genesis Place that is such a help and support for me.”*

– woman who found sanctuary  
in our supportive housing

*“My prayers are with your organization as you continue the incredible work you are doing!”*

– a faithful donor



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