



Seven Days:
Devotions
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Readings and Prayers
for the
Faith and Mortar Campaign

The Faith and Mortar team was mandated by the Board of Directors at John Knox Christian School to prepare a campaign to raise funds for this carefully thought out building project. It stretches us with an unfamiliar task. We take it on only with prayer for God's guidance. For that reason we also ask each of you to be in prayer for this project, for the work of the Board, the team, and the canvassers. Their work intends to bring honour to the Lord and his kingdom.

This series of simple devotions focuses on the unique quality of Christian education in our community. We want to affirm the place of John Knox Christian School not only as a beacon of God's light, but also a source of eternal values made available to young students. God offers us abundance in creation; it inspires our purpose to help young people flourish. We seek and appreciate your support in prayer.

Day One:

*Commit your work to the Lord,
and your plans will be established. Proverbs 16:3*

The Faith and Mortar team has committed this building project for John Knox Christian School to our Lord. From first thoughts and rough ideas, this undertaking has been an object of prayer. The Board of Directors has sought God's guidance and leading through the many twists and turns around needs and wants, possibilities and difficulties.

Plans are nothing without God's blessing. It is what we continue to seek as this project heads into its critical phase of asking for support. God has plans for us, for our students, for our school. We have placed our trust in him. Faith is one of the pillars of this project. That "assurance of things hoped for", as Hebrews puts it, is not only a major part of this campaign, it is also what we pray to build each day in our students.

Keep us in prayer each day.

Prayer: Lord, today we pray for the future of John Knox Christian School. More than that, we pray for your leading and guidance as we undertake this project. We ask that you strengthen our faith as we look to build with bricks and mortar. We commit this venture to you and seek your will. Bless us and bless all who work for your kingdom in this place. Find us encouraging. Find us faithful. With your blessing may this project bring glory and honour to you and great benefits to all around us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Day Two

“For by him all things were created, ... and he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” I Colossians 16-17.

The creation story is central to the Christian life and to learning at John Knox Christian School.

Knowing that God created a world with an order and purpose gives direction and hope to our lives. Sometimes that order is hard to see in the chaos of this broken world. Yet Paul’s words here remind us that through creation God holds all things together. As we look around us today we often think that things are “falling apart”. We sense that governments can no longer secure peace and good order and that large organizations bend the rules to suit themselves.

But this is God’s world. Yes, those problems are there and cannot be avoided, however, God’s sovereign grace is true.

This hope and the joy it bears is what gives life to the daily lesson plans and teaching practices at our Christian school. In the rolling tide of information, we focus on the wisdom of God and his creation power to hold things together. We know this is a great need today and a greater need tomorrow.

Prayer: Lord, we stand amazed at the beauty of your creation. You have made a world rich with wonder. Give us eyes to see that clearly. Grant us wisdom. May our Christian school equip our children to live in hope, to look through the brokenness and know that you hold all things together. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Day Three

“Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brothers the priests, and they built the Sheep Gate. They consecrated it and set its doors.”

Nehemiah 3:1a

There is much to gain from taking a good look at this story of Nehemiah and rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah is not mentioned often but his leadership proved a key support in moving the project forward. Eliashib is the first worker mentioned; with his fellow priests he takes the initiative and restores the Sheep Gate. We are told here that, “they consecrated it”, meaning that they set it apart for God’s glory and service. What emerges over the succeeding chapters is a picture of a community working together, dividing the labour justly, and working with a common purpose.

It’s an inspirational, positive story that reminds us that *why* we do something is as important as *what* we do. As we move along on this building project for John Knox Christian School, we are careful that we ask for God’s leading each step of the way. In that sense we dedicate our work to his glory and in his service. As a school, we remain invigorated by a common vision to enrich student lives with the power of the gospel as they gain the necessary skills to flourish as citizens of God’s kingdom and of Canada.

Prayer: Grant us a clear vision, Lord, to do your will in every walk of life. We ask that you bless this building endeavour of our school community. You have blessed us generously over the past 58 years; we pray that you will sustain us in your service as we desire to bring glory and honour to your name. Keep us faithful as you have been faithful to us. In Jesus’ name. Amen.



Day Four

*Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; ...
things that we have heard and known,
that our fathers have told us.
We will not hide them from their children,
but tell to the coming generation
the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might,
and the wonders that he has done. Psalm 78: 1, 3-4*



Recent studies show that a generation is now roughly 30 years. Generations are important to Christian schools. It can be said, for example, that John Knox has served Wyoming-Forest-Petrolia area for two generations. In that time God has done “glorious deeds” in our school, churches, and broader communities. Truly, the wonders have been going on for many more generations rolling back to creation itself. The Lord’s deeds and wonders are central to the story that we tell to our children. Those teachings, those ancient words are God’s words and they run through all the generations of mankind. It is their sacred quality that makes them not only precious, but valuable and eternal. The teachings endure; they do not wither away like the fashions of the day. There are fashions and trends in education. At our Christian school, the story of God and His people gives life to every thing we teach and how we teach it in each area of learning. We have undertaken this building project to sustain Christian learning and teaching in the years ahead so the “next generation” and those “yet unborn” might know and tell the story of God’s glorious deeds and wonders.



*Prayer: Keep us, Lord, faithful to your teachings that we may tell
Your story, old but ever new, to each generation.*

Day Five

“Jesus answered, ... and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” Mark 12:30

When Jesus responded to the lawyer’s testing question, he used all four terms including the word “mind”, which is not part of the Old Testament verse (Deuteronomy 6:5). The various leaders of the sixteenth century Reformation must have picked up on this because they often stressed the importance of learning, of developing the mind. It was for this reason that schools sprung up in places where the Reformation took hold.

Many schools in our province of Ontario were started by leaders from different churches. Colleges and universities in Canada and the United States began as institutions for learning with a clear Christian focus.

In its humble way, John Knox Christian School fits into a rich tradition. History shows, however, that maintaining a strong Christian character in education has its challenges.

Christ’s answer that he requires our whole being to love the Lord is reflected in our mission statement to equip students academically, spiritually, physically, and socially for service and for God’s glory.

May we continue to do so through the coming generations.

Prayer: Lord may we love you with our total being. May you use our school to grow the gifts of the mind to serve you and to bless those around. Give us words to speak of your glory and your presence in all parts of our lives.

Day Six

“...so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy...” Colossians 1: 10-11

A prayer often raised at John Knox asks the Lord that the “fruits of the spirit” may be visible in our classrooms, hallways, playgrounds, and buses. Idealistic maybe, but an expectation worth striving for and focusing on.

Bearing fruit is paired with “increasing in the knowledge of God”. Knowing God is at the heart of learning at our Christian school from JK to grade eight. That knowledge is always “increasing” and may never reach its fulness. Yet we persevere.

The text reminds us also that we are “strengthened with all power” and “for all endurance”. Christians are not in it for the short term but can take the long view.

God calls us to difficult things, things that stretch us.

The Faith and Mortar team knows this building project is challenging and will stretch our community. But in so doing we grow together and bear fruit in good work knowing God strengthens us in our perseverance. We have laid all this before our Lord and seek to please him and do his will.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we pray for your strength as we come together to support Christian learning at our school. May our children and the children to come be blessed with knowing more and more about you and the world you have made. Give us endurance and patience to walk in your way as we commit to this challenging project. May the fruits of the spirit be evident in us and in our children. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Day Seven

How precious is your steadfast love, O God!

The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

*They feast on the abundance of your house,
and you give them drink from the river of your delights.*

*For with you is the fountain of life;
in your light do we see light.*

*Oh, continue your steadfast love to those who know you,
and your righteousness to the upright of heart!*

Psalm 36: 7-10

These are familiar words to us. After all our school's tagline for many years has been, "In Your light do we see light". They remain words of truth. Education intends to "enlighten", to make things clear and understandable. Christian education, however, looks to an eternal source of light. The light of reason is one of God's gifts to people, but he offers us so much more. The passage above tells of abundance. God fills our world and our lives with a wealth of gifts including love, refuge, and delights. His fountain of life bubbles over and does not run dry.

At our Christian school we focus on the light of God to see his light shining through creation, through the people he places around us. We often pray that our school may be a beacon in our community. We have been richly blessed and pray that our light may grow ever stronger and clearer.

Prayer: May John Knox Christian School be a beacon that reflects your eternal light. May we daily celebrate the abundance of life that you offer to us. We ask your blessing that you will cause our light to shine brighter and clearer through the generations. In Jesus' name. Amen.

