

The Summer of Networking *by Jo-Ann Swenson, Membership Chair*

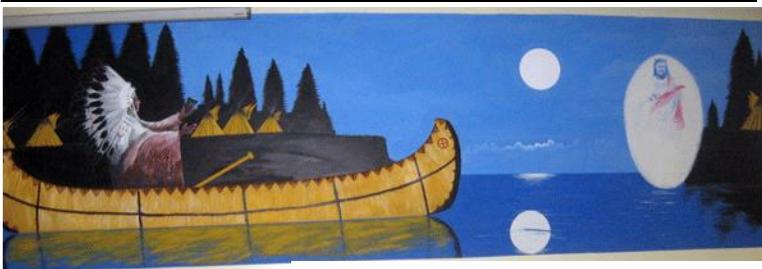
Greetings to all of our Brothers and Sisters. We are very pleased to share with you some of the amazing things that God has been doing this summer at Bethlehem. God has been telling us to watch for "networking" wanting us to be involved with other ministries in our neighborhood. Some of those ministries include Angel. Angel runs a 24/7 daycare for children at risk in her home here in our community. The "Muffin Lady," Jo-Ann visits her on the weekly Thursday outing into the neighborhood to distribute muffins and prayer throughout the North End. Each week we have been blessed with wonderful speakers and worship leaders from near and far.



The Lord has been networking for us with people such as Michael Gertsman who is the leader of the Lion of Judah Ministries from Israel. He encouraged us to keep going. He said that it pleases the Lord to Tabernacle with us here in Bethlehem. Roger Armbruster who is the Director of "Canada Awakening" ministry spoke one Sunday. Roger, together with a former leader of one of the local gangs expressed to us the need for our work here to continue. Doug Sadler, who is the Manitoba Director of YWAM spoke to us of God's light shining from BAF into dark places. Clint Toews, a pastor and Author of the book, "In Search of My Father", supports and encourages us often. Jim and Jackie Wiseman, ministry leaders in the inner city, shared their vision for BAF of a packed congregation with a great outreach to the North End. Michael Thom, from the local Christian radio station, CHVN shared the value of small encounters, making a huge impact.

It has been a joy to receive these gifts from God. Their words of encouragement and prophecy have inspired us to continue on the path that the Lord has been guiding us on. We have had several gifted worship leaders who ushered us into the presence of the Lord where we have sensed the angels worshipping with us. Jason Foster and his wife from a church called Floodgates have led praise and worship for us. We have also had Michael Doulan and Mark Sebourne from local churches come and lead us in worship.

The Lord has also raised up people from the congregation to speak and to worship. God is so good!!



"Welcome" - A mural painted by Fred B.

The BAF Board Report

Blessings from the Board at Bethlehem. We are very happy to share with you our journey with the Lord this summer. We have been receiving many lessons from God that have been changing us and the way we approach our dealings with Church business.

The first thing we have been trying to learn is to wait. He wants us to wait on Him. God's timing is so different from ours. He is never in a rush. We are not to allow the pressures from the "important or urgent" things to press us into action, but rather stop, wait, pray and then act on every decision we are to make no matter how big or small. That is why we begin every meeting with a quiet time of listening to soaking music to align our souls and minds up with God. Our Father is much more concerned with our relationship with Him individually and corporately than He is with what we are doing FOR Him in the Board.

The next thing we are to learn is to pray. Pray before the meeting, during the meeting and after the meeting. Father God has plans and opinions on every aspect of our Church dealings. He is eager to share them all with us when we quiet our own thoughts and ask Him to show us how to proceed. He says He has already gone before us to map out and plan the way in which we are to go. Then He comes back to us, takes us by the hand and walks us down that path. He has already foreseen every obstacle and difficulty ahead of us. He has a solution for every trial. He has laid out blessings along the way. Why would we choose not to call on Him for His plans? Yet still, we are human and used to doing things with our own understanding. We are still learning this one but are getting better and better at it.

Another thing He has been teaching us is to follow the truth, not the facts. The facts may be that we had a low offering one week but the truth is that He supplies ALL our needs according to His riches in Glory. The Truth says let the poor say I am rich. The fact is that we are without a Shepherd at this time. The Truth says that the Lord will never leave us or forsake us. He is our Good Shepherd. The Truth says that if we acknowledge Him in all our ways, He shall direct all our paths.

All of these things sound like excellent ways to conduct our personal lives but not necessarily the approach that we would think to take as a Board. But Jesus is leading us to apply all of these things to every aspect of our Board business. It changes everything. We are not as stressed or burdened or fearful as we could be. Things work out easily and beautifully. Answers to problems have come that we had no idea about.

We are re-writing our Constitution at this time. We were quite nervous to begin, as this is way beyond our comfort level and expertise but God is bringing it all together quite easily. Our books and finances are falling into place and we met the deadline for our year-end audit. None of us has ever had anything to do with bookkeeping before. Many other deadlines are being met. Father God has hand-picked for us a fabulous secretary and an awesome bookkeeper. He has sent a wealth of excellent speakers and worship leaders and even some newcomers to the Sunday services. It turns out that Jesus is able to do a wonderful job of running the Church when we let him. We just show up and do the work He gives us to do. Praise God. Bless you all and thank you for your loving kindnesses towards us.

From the Board

YouCook by Natalie Rempel

YouCook is a new program that runs out of Bethlehem Aboriginal Fellowship. The goals of this program are to educate kids from the community about basic cooking skills as well as nutrition and health information that will equip them to make healthier choices in their own lives. YouCook runs twice a week, for two different groups of kids. We are into our third week of this program and have had maximum numbers of kids attending each session. It is exciting to see kids grasp knowledge that can significantly impact their health and quality of life. YouCook will continue to run throughout the rest of the summer and I look forward to spend more time learning and cooking with the kids who attend.



A Note from Clint Toews

I scanned the daily news this morning and noted our city's 19th homicide again in the inner city. Life there is a story of survival at every level of living. Some people literally live day to day, scrambling for enough to get by. Many have a lifestyle which defeats them, bringing on domestic violence, gang involvement, substance abuse, poverty, depression, disease and death.

This is a perfect scenario for the gospel and the powerful, personal love of Jesus to flourish. Words and programs are not enough in the face of such brokenness. Unless God intervenes, all hell breaks loose. Bethlehem church stands as a lighthouse on this rocky shore. We see firsthand the transforming, saving grace of the Holy Spirit who changes wasted people into worshippers of Jesus. Even though the scars of wounded hearts remain, God's presence overcomes the past as people who have trusted Christ grow in faith day by day. At BAF we are focused on relationship, how to love each other and the Lord our God with all our hearts. His light shines into the darkness and we thankfully rejoice that our feet are on a 'sure foundation'.

The Bible says "we are one body in Christ". That truth calls each of us to pray for and help each other in these trying times. Isaiah 35 talks about a highway of holiness on which God's people travel along with Him. We at BAF are thankful to be walking beside you and each other. Please keep praying for your church family at BAF.

Muffin Ministry by "the Muffin Lady" Jo-Ann Swenson

It has been great fun to see the connections happening in the neighborhood around Bethlehem as we continue to hand out muffins every Thursday morning.

We met an amazing lady called Angel who has a 24 hour child care in the area. Children can be brought to her child care centre at any time. Her beautiful smile and gentle manner welcomes each child and they feel safe in her care. As we visit them with muffins these precious children gather around Angel, and come excitedly to receive muffins for their snack. Also there are several houses that we visit where there are "prayer warriors", (women who we pray with for the neighborhood). Another family asks us in to pray for their grandchildren who are in the youth centre. One of the storekeepers in the area greets us with joy as we visit his shop and pray for his business. A prostitute walking by the church receives a muffin with joy, then asked "would you pray for me?" We have become a "legend = the muffin ladies" in the neighborhood, as people wait expectantly for us to come along the streets on Thursdays so they can receive a muffin given with the Love of God, and prayer if needed.

Foodbank by Jo-Ann Swenson & Marcy Matheson

Foodbank has been running smoothly. We serve up to 60 families each Tuesday. We have 8 faithful volunteers who work well together. It is a blessing to serve the community in this way. We see the joy on the faces of the clients as they come in and are greeted with smiles, coffee and goodies. They will often come up to one of us and ask for prayer. We read them a verse from the Bible and pray for them as a group before we start the Foodbank.

Work Force Job Studio by Kristin Fligg

Work Force is off to a great start! Our program partners with local businesses that provide odd jobs for the youth to perform. Tasks range from things like cleaning, painting, mowing lawns, stocking shelves and answering phones. The youth rotate between these jobs and then Work Force pays the youth minimum wage per hour that they work. We have seen how a program like this can make a positive impact on everyone involved. The businesses and residents benefit by receiving free labor; while the youth in return gain valuable job experience, basic life skills and as they work to earn their own wage they develop a higher self esteem and also learn money management skills. The youth are also invited to join us for a Bible study after work, and we have been seeing a pretty consistent turn out. We also enjoy spending time with the youth outside of work whether it be field trips, going out for lunch, or volunteering together. Thanks!



Summer 16s by Natalie Rempel on behalf of Jocelyn Chan

Summer 16s is a dimension of Work Force which hires 16 year old youth from the community for 7 weeks during the summer. This year, 5 youth have been hired to work at several local businesses. This is an important program for these youth as it gives them an opportunity to maintain a job for a length of time as well as provides mentoring as they experience the work force and develop important job skills. The hired youth are into their fourth weeks of their jobs and although learning, doing well at their jobs. Some of the comments that their employers have reported include, "She is taking initiative on the job... we really enjoy having her here." "He is coming in on time and developing a good routine at work," and "They are going above and beyond what they need to do... really great employees."

