



## **GOD'S AMAZING MOSAIC OF LOVE**

*submitted by Jo-Ann Swenson, on behalf of the Board*

The Lord has been creating an amazing Mosaic of Love in our little congregation of Bethlehem Aboriginal Fellowship. According to 1 John 3:1: we read "How great is the Love the Father has LAVISHED upon us, that we should be called the children of God". His Love is not just "trickled" upon us, but "lavished". That is abundance!

Here at Bethlehem we have been experiencing this lavish love! I will touch on some highlights of the past few months and you will read more detailed accounts throughout this newsletter.

In March, we had the privilege of hosting a baby dedication. A precious little girl was dedicated to the Lord and we all celebrated with her parents and extended family. We were blessed to partner with Floodgates church, and SOAR Heartland to have a week where the children of the neighborhood were ministered to, and where at the culmination of the week, Floodgates hosted a BBQ for the community and about 200 people came!

In April we were blessed to be able to baptize four young ladies! This is the first time in many years that we have had baptisms in BAF. It was an amazing time of celebration and fun as these young ladies dedicated themselves to the Lord. Also in April we had our Annual General meeting and people expressed their gratitude for what the Lord had done throughout the year. His Love has sustained us through people praying for us and many churches and individuals sending in financial donations. He also continued to send wonderful speakers and worship leaders to us each Sunday.

In May we continued to reach out to the community with our Food bank and our ten amazing volunteers who come faithfully to serve. We also continue to reach out to many of the people in the community through our Muffin Ministry, encouraging them with muffins, smiles and prayer. In June, our Work Force ministry began teaching young people in the community employment skills and giving them experience at different job locations in the area. And during July we were privileged to have a large number of young people at BAF, ages 12-18, from SERVE. These young people were from CBWC churches across western Canada and did some amazing work in and around BAF for a week.

Our hearts are filled with thankfulness for this beautiful "mosaic of God's Love". As the Chief Shepherd He cares for this little flock of His.

## **Baptism**

*by Beth Wilton, Board Member*

In the Spring, Bethlehem baptized 4 young women. Two attend the church and two, who have been part of a Bible Study with me for years, didn't have a home church, but really wanted to be baptized. The basement where we hold our services was packed out with guests of the women. There was standing room only. Each woman shared a bit of the story of how she had come to this point. We heard about a lot of struggles and heart break. We also heard how they had overcome some of these difficulties with Jesus and how they each had come to realize how important Jesus was in their lives now. It took a lot of courage to stand up and declare this publicly. Each one had someone who was special to them in their journey with Christ, baptize them. Our beautifully decorated wooden baptismal tank hadn't been used for a while and ending up having a slow leak which had to be constantly mopped up! But it truly was a beautiful time and very meaningful to the women as well as to our little congregation and the guests.



## **SERVE Hits BETHLEHEM**

You could feel the excitement and energy that filled the air as between 40 and 60 young people from SERVE filled our church on any given day for one week at the beginning of July and began renovations on the building. These young people represented five youth groups from B.C., Alberta, Saskatchewan and one from Winnipeg. Each youth group also had a leader with them. The out-of-towners raised their own travel and food money to come to the inner-city to work on different projects free of charge.

At Bethlehem they scraped and sanded and painted the whole basement. They repaired the mortar and lathe in the stairwell. They scraped and sanded and painted the walls and part of the ceiling in the front entrance. They also cleaned out then re-pointed all the limestone bricks around the bottom of the church building. Nine of them also hit the streets with the Muffin Ministry Team to hand out free muffins and pray for the people individually. Job site foremen, Blaine Repko and James Spurgeon joined with the Winnipeg co-coordinator, Sandra Sabourin months before hand to plan each job detail including the hours each job would take, the number of people needed for the job and every tool and piece of equipment needed. Their hard work paid off with seven days of labor that ran like clockwork. They estimated that between 50 and 70 thousand dollars of work was completed by these young Christians.

What a blessing from God! The joy and encouragement they brought was priceless. Thank you to each and every one of you.



## **Baby Dedication**



Parents Dana and Jeremy are proud to have baby Shanolynn dedicated. March 2013.

## **An Interview with Lois Mawby**

by Beth Wilton

Me: Lois, what is your job at BAF and what do you do?

Lois: *I'm the Office Administrator which means I answer the phones and door, work with workmen and contractors, solve problems in the building, contact all sorts of people about a variety of things, keep files, work with some wonderful people and pray a lot!*

Me: Tell us a bit about yourself.

Lois: *I grew up in Winnipeg's North End until I was about 10. There were 8 kids in the family and I had a hard home life. I became a rough, tough North End kid, although I saw myself as normal. I didn't feel the North End was a very safe positive place back then. Then we moved to Dryden, Ont. where I lived for the next 34 years. One day when I was still young, my dad decided it was time for his girls to become Christians so he phoned a local pastor to come help him with that. So I didn't have a lot of choice but I knew I didn't like being forced.*

Me: Was there a point where you did make the choice for yourself?

Lois: *A while later I saw a Christian movie and I gave my life to Christ then. We had already been going to church for a while and now I didn't want to miss church. I got involved with the youth group and actually met my husband Shane there. Over time though, going to church became a duty; my heart wasn't in it. But God started working on me inside and showed me I really needed Him. I realized there was no one to take His place.*

Me: How did you end up in Winnipeg?

Lois: *Four years ago we moved to Winnipeg because God told us to. We had to sell our house, quit our jobs and go on blind faith. We didn't know why God wanted us there. After working it through with the Lord, we had a lot of joy and no fear in moving. We knew God would supply our needs.*

Me: How did you end up at BAF?

Lois: *Last year I asked God for a part time job but put the conditions on that it couldn't be weekends, evenings or any physical labour. Then I got a phone call from a woman at BAF who said God kept putting me on her heart for this job. The job met all the conditions I'd made with God! I went for an interview but before that I knew this was the place God wanted me.*

Me: So what have you learned? How's it been for you?

Lois: *I've learned that I'm more capable than I thought. I've learned new skills and I learned more diplomacy in handling people issues. God has also been changing my outlook on the North End. I came with fear and trembling remembering how it was when I grew up here. But I can't believe how warm and friendly the people in the community are and how giving they are. Even if they don't have much for themselves, they are willing to give what they have. It's a joy to be here.*

## **YouCook** by Natalie Rempel, YouCook Coordinator

YouCook is a program of Work Force which teaches basic cooking and baking skills as well as educates about nutrition and health. It is geared towards children and youth in the North End of Winnipeg. Each group of kids spends two hours together once a week, preparing a nutritious meal and learning about healthy eating. We play games and have lots of interactive activities for the youth to learn this important information. This summer, I have two junior leaders assisting with YouCook, and they are thriving by taking on leadership in the program and learning new kitchen skills for themselves. I am amazed by their desire to learn so that they can teach younger people from their community. Please pray that this program is a safe place for kids to learn important life skills as well as be exposed to the love of Jesus.

## **Summer Work Force**, submitted by Shaunna Goode

It's that time of year again and Summer Work Force is in full swing. We've had over 70 youth between the ages of 12 to 15 walk through our doors since the program began in June. Pretty amazing, isn't it?

Most days when we are open, we have anywhere between 20 to 30 youth eagerly waiting for names to be drawn for jobs for work that day. We have a Wall of Fame where we post comments about the youth that we have received from their employers. Some of the positive comments we've heard from the employers include such things as "They always make sure the job is done well! Such hard workers and Awesome job! Can't believe how amazing they worked. Made my day." The Wall of Fame is something that the youth really enjoy. They love reading the comments to see if their names have been included. It is a great way to bolster their confidence and self-esteem.



Recently, I found myself wondering what it was that attracted youth to our program, so I decided to ask some of them. Here's what I found out. They come because they enjoy having the opportunity to make money. They come because they like having the chance to make new friends and try new things. They come because they find it fun to hang out with the leaders. They come because it helps them to learn how to communicate with people with whom they normally do not interact. They come because they get to experience the satisfaction of a job well done.

We are really looking forward to see what God will do in the lives of the youth this summer. There are several of them who are truly seeking to find out who God is for themselves; while there are others who are really not sure what they believe. Please remember to keep these youth in your prayers. We are trusting God to do some incredible things in their lives and would love if you could join us in this.

## **WORK FORCE JOB START** submitted by Jocelyn Chan, Job Start Coordinator

During the fall I run the Job Studio, our job training program, and once youth complete that program, the next step is to search and apply for jobs. This is not always easy for our youth, and that is why we have created Job Start, an arm of the Job Studio. Job Start is an 8-week summer job placement program in which we hire 5 youth (2 of them are Job Studio grads) between the ages of 16-20 to work 10 hours a week with local partnering businesses. They do tasks like: cooking, teaching children, leading activities, cleaning, serving coffee, using the cash register, and gardening. This program is intended to give youth an opportunity to gain work experience and continue developing their job skills.

I have found that the youth are gaining benefits that go way beyond just making money. They are consistently learning new things about themselves; their likes ("I don't mind cleaning bathrooms!") and dislikes ("I hate chopping onions"), and how much they can actually accomplish when they work and try hard! One girl noted why she was so proud of herself, "I have learned that I can wake up on time and make it to work by myself!" Another youth was able to purchase clothing with her own money for the first time. These youth are truly learning what success means and how great it can feel to succeed. They are starting to see what wonderful and talented people God has created them to be!

