



Bethlehem Aboriginal Fellowship

September 2015 Newsletter

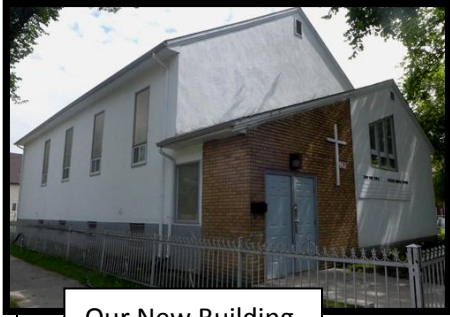


A New Day Dawns for Bethlehem Aboriginal Fellowship

Psalms 118: 24: "This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it."

A new day dawns for BAF. After 20 years of ministering to the North End community from the "lighthouse" of 294 Burrows, BAF has been released from the financial burden of the huge expenses for maintaining 294 Burrows. We have now journeyed over to 467 Manitoba, responding to the invitation of Pastor Paul Winter (Living Word Temple) to share his building.

Having landed in the new location on June 1, BAF is continuing to minister to the community through food bank, Sunday services, youth ministry, children's ministry, muffin ministry and men's ministry.



Our New Building

The move itself was a HUGE undertaking! My thought was "It's like trying to fit an elephant into a Volkswagen". I expressed this thought to the Lord and said we would not be able to take much "stuff" from the Burrows building. The Lord chided me gently saying "It's not about the "stuff". There's plenty of room for the people!" So true! The sanctuary at Living Word is light and very spacious so there's lots of room for the people to come and worship. Living Word has their service in the morning and BAF is in the afternoon. It works well. The basement is fully finished and works for the food bank that we transferred over. The food bank now runs as a joint endeavour with Living Word, and volunteers from both congregations are working together as a team to serve the community with food from Winnipeg Harvest. An extra blessing occurred recently when a team from Alabama came to Living Word and Pastor Paul organized them to unload the Winnipeg Harvest truck!

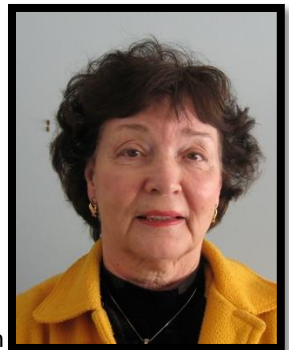
That same week I was able to take a team of the Alabama and Living Word people out on the street to hand out muffins to the community! We had an amazing time of talking with people, hearing one man's powerful testimony, praying with others and pouring out God's love and joy into the community. God is "networking" our two groups beautifully.

It sounds as though it is all "praise reports", but there are definitely "challenges" in renting space from another church. Our Work Force team (our youth program) faced the biggest challenges this summer. However, I want to say that they managed so amazingly despite lack of cooking facilities (the gas stove at Living Word had to be dismantled just as Work Force started). Also the city decided to tear up the streets all around the building, so the water to the building was often turned off. It was amazing to see how the Work Force team "soldiered" on in the midst of the chaos! We were proud of them.

Our office administrator Lois, was transplanted from a huge spacious office where she could exercise her hospitality gift with coffee and prayer for the staff and others. She has now been relegated to a tiny corner, with a "fold-up" type desk, behind the Living Word soundboard as there is just no other place for her. This is not ideal as an office so we would ask you to pray for God's wisdom as to how to change this.

So, it is a "new day" for BAF! We are excited to see what the Lord has in store for the two congregations; what His kingdom purposes are for us separately and together for the community. We want to thank you all for continuing to pray for us as we have transitioned, and also as we are learning to adjust. Also we thank you for the continued financial support as we still have expenses in the new location. We are praising the Lord that He has brought us thus far and that He will continue to provide for us to further His Kingdom in the North End.

The BAF Board Report: by Jo-Ann Swenson



Summer Work Force by Shaunna Goode



Having a new building, new staff and new kids made for an interesting summer. I have to admit that in the beginning I felt rather sorry for the new summer staff. Here they were starting out in an unfamiliar setting and to top it off they found themselves caught up in the midst of a major move. They however handled it like champions ever ready to go with the flow and lend their muscles where needed.

One of the perks of our new location is that it is right beside a school. I think this is one of the reasons we had such a huge number of youth attend our info sessions in early June – around 90 youth came out to hear what the program was all about. Fortunately, the numbers did not stay that high because otherwise we would have had to get really creative about how handle so many youth in the program. As a result of the move, I tried not to change things too much with the program this summer.

We still had youth between the ages of 12-15 going out in pairs to gain entry level job experience working for local businesses or doing odd jobs for residents in the area; however, we did introduce a few new things. For example, we turned pay days into a bigger celebration with the youth by offering a meal on these days. I really enjoyed having the chance to sit down and talk with the youth over dinner every other Thursday. Something else we introduced this year was clubs. Clubs provided the youth with an opportunity to explore different things in which they were interested when they weren't working. This summer we offered three clubs: sports, cooking and arts and crafts. These clubs did not run as well as we would have hoped; however, we are all set with a new battle plan for next summer in order to make them a greater success. One idea we are kicking around is possibly having other adults besides the staff host a club with the youth. This would help to increase the variety of clubs we are able to offer because they wouldn't be limited to the skill set of the summer staff. (Just thought I'd put the bug in your ear about this now!)

The spiritual awareness of the group this summer was rather different than I've seen in previous years. I would have to say that the majority of them identified with either being Christian or being from a Christian background. There were also some who came from a blend of both Christian and aboriginal spiritual backgrounds. What we noticed as we tried to share Christ with them during our planned group talks or in the course of our one-on-one mentoring times was that many showed an interest in hearing about Jesus but were not at the point of wanting to pursue Him. This was difficult to deal with at times because what we desire for them above all else is that they would be fully committed to Christ.

With the fall programming beginning in a few weeks, I'm praying that these youth would be interested in getting involved. We would love to provide a safe environment for them in which they can experience Christ, both exploring who He is and understanding who they are in Him.

Children's Ministry, by Penny Brunet

We are mom Penny and daughter Makenzee who joined the BAF Children's Ministry in December 2014.

It has been an honor and privilege to work with the community children. Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." We are very excited to partner with the parents to achieve this life giving goal.

Because we started in December, we went straight into celebrating the birth of our Savior, with lessons, crafts and songs. The kids have had great fun with the crafts and learning with us.

We have started in Genesis and are getting back to basics. We use lessons, craft activities and DVDs to reinforce the story of the day. So far we've learned things like God's love for us, how sin came in to the world, how Jesus is our Savior, to give God our best and not be jealous, to be humble and not proud and much more.

We are all learning to work together with manners and respect for God and each other. We have had an amazing time learning and growing

together and we are very excited to continue on together.

The children are a true blessing to us and we hope we bless them.



Work Force Job Start 2015: by Jocelyn Chan, Job Start Coordinator

Wow, what a summer! That's the first thing that comes to mind as I sit to reflect a little about everything that has happened in the last 4 months. There have undoubtedly been many changes and challenges, but nothing that the Lord can't handle!

First of all, as I am sure has already been mentioned, we moved! When Bethlehem Aboriginal Fellowship closed the doors at 294 Burrows and moved in to share space with Living Word Temple, Work Force and all our ministries went along too. We want to continue ministering to the youth in this neighbourhood and are glad to still be in William Whyte!

Moving was not easy. Not only was it physically demanding – going through 20+ years of Work Force stuff in the building, packing, marking things to sell, and of course the actual move itself; it was also emotionally difficult to leave our place on Burrows. I do not fare well with change, so it was especially hard to say goodbye to our beautiful sanctuary, our roomy offices and our big youth room; and to the memories that we've made over the last many years. That being said, we are grateful to be here but are still learning how to accommodate ourselves, and our program and youth into this new space.

This summer, I ran Job Start – a program where I interviewed and hired 5 youth between the ages of 16-20 for job placements for 10 hours per week. We also received an Urban Green Team grant to hire 2 more youth to work 22 hours per week! This was an exciting addition as it meant being able to give more youth even more experience, which was great because we had 20 youth interview for the 7 spots! This summer the job placements included: a thrift store, an ambassador program, Youth for Christ, a museum, animal services, William Whyte Residents Association, and several children's programs. This summer was interesting; I realized this group in particular had a lot to learn about the importance of showing up for work, being punctual, and remaining focused on tasks. Each youth was very unique and only on the very last day did I start to see some team bonding and camaraderie forming!

Some highlights from the summer include:

- 1 youth being offered a part time position in the fall from her placement
- 1 youth confessing and praying for forgiveness for something that had been weighing heavily on him for quite some time
- 2 "Impact Events" led by the youth. Impact events are voluntary service activities the group decides to do to help someone else. This year we gave out water bottles at the Forks and also held a community car wash to raise funds for a good cause. These were meaningful events for the team.
- Our wind up lunch at Perkins; for most of the youth this was their first time there.
- 1 girl made a savings goal at the beginning of the summer and reached it by putting aside some money from each paycheque and learning about budgeting!

Please keep these 7 youth in your prayers as they apply what they've learned this summer to their daily lives. Please pray for Work Force as well, as we continue to adjust to programming in our new place.



Moving out of our 100+ year old building by Karin Regehr

Here we are, having completed 3 months in our new premise on 467 Manitoba Ave. We received a warm welcome from our "landlord", Living Word Temple, the board and pastor of that church family.

The big challenge of course was moving from 10,000 square feet, to maybe 2000? This was especially noticeable to our expanded Work Force summer staff who brought in many exuberant youth for July and August.

Thinking back to our Burrows location and the move, I can't believe we did it! We moved out literally thousands of items! Furniture and toys were left on the curb with "help yourself" signs. The kitchen was packed and emptied to bless other charities, probably 50 years' worth, as well as many hundreds of books.

About 20 boxes of Christian material and Bibles were sent on their way to Asia and Africa, and some sent up to northern Manitoba with our travelling elder. We had a huge one day sale. Thanks to every volunteer! The two months of moving out was an exhausting process at times but also grace-filled, for which we thank the Lord.

He is good all the time and is continuing to lead and guide us through the challenges of this transition. We move into fall continuing with women's ministry, muffin ministry, food bank and Sunday worship service. The women's group is a deep encouragement to those who attend as we pray fervently for each other's needs and the needs of the community. We are grateful to touch hearts as we offer muffins and prayer on Thursday mornings and enjoy the looks of surprise from those we meet, "You want to give me something?" Our Sunday worship is increasing in numbers and we sense the Lord's Presence with us.

We thank you for your faithful support and prayer as you are partners with us.

