



Bethlehem Aboriginal Fellowship

September 2016 Newsletter



THE GOOD GOOD FATHER



“Every good and perfect gift comes from above, from the Father of Lights who does not change like shifting shadows”. (James 1:17)

We at Bethlehem Aboriginal Fellowship can testify to the goodness of Father God in our life.

He is Abba Father (daddy”) to the little flock at BAF, where many of us have not had fathers watching over us as we were growing up. He LAVISHES his love on us (1 John 3:1).

1) We can trust Him to care for us. “Fear not little flock for your Father has been pleased to give you the Kingdom.” (Luke 12:32). Each Sunday and through the week we experience Father God’s loving hand caring for us. For 20 years now He has been caring for Bethlehem, pouring out His Presence. We have come through floods and fires at 294 Burrows and a

migration from 294 Burrows to 467 Manitoba Ave. where we rent space in a building with another church body (Living Word Temple). We have now been at 467 Manitoba for one year, and the Good Father has helped us to continue building His Kingdom of love in the community.

- 2) We’ve received wonderful “gifts” of people resources: speakers/teachers, worship leaders, children’s ministry leaders and prayer warriors. Each one comes with a heart to serve the little flock and to bring glory to the Lord. He’s also continued to send financial gifts to us from all across Canada so that we can share God’s Love. We are so thankful.
- 3) He’s raised up wonderful “gifts” from within the body: Debbie, our secretary, an amazingly gifted young woman who organizes (“tetra-sizing” we call it) and co-ordinates us as well as shines like a star as a single mom with her 3 children. Alan is a teen challenge leader who has a big heart for the inner city, and whom the good Father imported from B.C to be with us.
- 4) When we need wisdom as to what to do, Abba Father says in James 1:3, “If anyone lacks wisdom he should ask God who gives generously to all without finding fault and it will be given to him.” We needed wisdom as to how to set up the food bank in a smaller space to serve the 60-70 people per week. He gave us the wisdom and wonderful volunteers from the community and from near-by churches. He also gave us wisdom how to create BAF’s office when there was no office space available. Wisdom will be needed as the city tears up our front street from August to Oct. We need to ensure access and availability to people and vehicles.
- 5) Jeremiah 2:13 says, “For my people have committed 2 evils. They have forsaken Me, the fountain of Living Waters and they have hewn for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.” There is NO ONE like our God. He is greater than any other. He calls us to stay focused on Him and not to seek wisdom from our own understanding.

Jo-Ann Swenson on behalf of the BAF Board

Prayer Requests:

- Pray for wisdom for the Elders as they identify and develop those the Lord is calling into leadership in our Body
- Our finances are dwindling somewhat so we would ask for prayer for the Lord to increase His provision.
- The Lord has been clarifying some things regarding a part-time pastor so we are waiting on His timing and provision.

Summer Work Force *by Shaunna Goode*

This was my fourth year overseeing Summer Work Force. The structure of the program has basically remained the same throughout this time. We continue to have community youth between the ages of 12-15 go out to work in the community with local businesses or residents for 3 days a week for a maximum of 2 hours each day. A few of the jobs they do are cutting grass, stocking shelves, organizing product, cleaning and painting fences. However, each year the program feels a little bit different because we get new youth and different summer staff. As a result of these variations, each year produces a group with its own distinctive culture and climate.



I thought it might be an interesting idea to explore how God has been at work within this year's Summer Work Force culture. So here are some things that we have been seeing.



There has been a change in the youth throughout the course of the summer. This has become their community. This is particularly evident in the youth who were initially quieter or shyer at the beginning of the summer. These youth have come to a place in which they feel so comfortable at Work Force that they have begun to really open up. I've heard one youth speak about her heart for keeping the neighbourhood clean because this would help instill a sense of pride in community members. I've also seen others who came to Work Force on their own but now have friends who they can laugh and be silly with. One girl even used to come to Work Force with the hood on her sweater up because she wanted to hide herself amongst the crowd. However, now she no longer feels the need to stay hidden. This is a place she feels safe enough to be herself without judgment.

Something else that has been really exciting to see this summer is the fact that there are so many of the youth who are interested in learning about Jesus. For example, the number of youth who stay back for our God talks has grown. At the beginning of the summer there were only a few who stayed and now on average we have at least 10 youth at these sharing times. In addition, we also had one youth who expressed an interest in helping her friends know more about Jesus. She jumped on our suggestion that she could co-lead a girl's Bible study with one of our leaders. This has been happening on Tuesday afternoons since about mid-July.

As a result of the things that have been happening this summer, we are truly looking forward to what God has in store as we transition into our fall programming. Our prayer is that we would be able to continue to strengthen the relationships that have been formed and that the youth's interest in learning more about Jesus would impact the way in which they live their daily lives. This group of youth has distinct needs and a distinct personality. With the focus of the summer being "Adventure with Jesus," we would appreciate your prayers so that we don't get stuck in the trap of doing the same old same old just because it's safe.



**Infinity, Girls Club and the Work Force Job Studio are a partnership between Bethlehem Aboriginal Fellowship and Youth for Christ.*

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Adult and Teen Challenge Central Canada Winnipeg



I am Aboriginal man from Victoria, BC now working and living in Winnipeg. I work with Adult and Teen Challenge facilitating Bible studies in provincial and federal institutions. The Lord calls out to men who are incarcerated. There are men who are hungry for His word, others who have been influenced by their families and know the Word of God, and still other men who are hearing the Word for the first time. The Chaplains in the institutions have shared with me that the men talk about subjects we have studied at our Bible studies. This is encouraging to hear. Pray for continued growth in the lives of these men and their families.

Alan Edward (Alan's ministry is not an outreach of BAF but Alan is very involved at BAF and occasionally we get to meet some of his guys).

Job Start 2016 by Jocelyn Chan, Job Start Coordinator

This summer I ran Job Start again, a program where we interview and hire older youth mostly from the community and put them in job placements for the months of July and August. We had 22 teenagers apply for jobs, which made my job challenging! We hired 5 youths who worked 10 hours per week, and an additional 2 youths to work 20+ hours per week, working in various organizations in the north end.

In the beginning, all 7 youths were very diligent and hardworking, never missing shifts. However by week 3, their employers noticed more missed shifts and unfocused attitudes. 1 youth had to be let go and replaced, and a couple others received warnings about their attendance.

Despite these hiccups, I am so proud of the group. One of the girls working at the museum is learning how to speak to the public and is discovering how talented she is with working with children. Her employer says: *"She has been doing great interactions with all visitors, and being very thorough with her interactions. She is very 'on task,' which is lovely to witness!"* Another girl was hired to work with animals, but when that job fell through, ended up working in an office doing cleaning and filing work. Though this is not a glamorous or "fun" job and definitely not what she signed up for, she perseveres and has an amazing attitude about work.



Mid-summer, I asked the youth if they wanted to do an Impact event, something that would give back to the community. They unanimously voted on having a yard sale, and donating the proceeds to Siloam Mission, a nearby humanitarian organization. The youths brought in their own items from home to sell – clothing, books, paintings, purses, shoes, winter accessories, etc. They also sold baked goods and lemonade. In total they raised \$220, and were so proud to be able to serve others!

As this is the first work experience for most of our youth, we meet weekly to discuss how work is going, what they are liking about their jobs, and also what they find challenging. We also do an X-Factor, which is a time we talk about Jesus or a concept from the bible. One moment that was particularly memorable was when the youth watched a video on forgiveness, and heard a story about how a mother was able to forgive the man who killed her only son. This led to a discussion on which wrongdoings we ourselves deemed "humanly forgivable", and which required the power of Jesus to forgive. Every week the youth are also given a chance to write down something they'd like prayer for, and I have been able to pray for their requests throughout the week. All in all, it's been an incredibly meaningful summer!



Meet Nancy by Beth Wilton

Me: Nancy, what was your life like before you knew Jesus?

Nancy: I was raised by my grandma on the reserve because there were too many of us kids for my mom to take care of. My dad had died. When I was 8, I was sexually abused by my uncle and by the time I was 10 I was acting out – stealing, drinking and getting in trouble with the law. Through CFS, I eventually got placed into group homes and lock ups. Through CFS I got a big sister named Iona and I ended up staying in her foster home for a couple of years. I was about 16 by now. But I didn't change a lot even though this was a good place, but I learned about God from Iona and I asked Him into my life.

Me: So when and how did things turn around for you?

Nancy: As an adult, life still didn't change for me. I put Jesus aside, and things really started to go downhill. I became an alcoholic, drug addicted and at one time was into prostitution. By the time I was in my early 30's, many of my family and friends had died and I was afraid I would die. One night I didn't even realize I was praying but I asked God to help me. A few weeks later I found out I was pregnant. At the same time, God took away all my desire to drink and do drugs. I have been drug and alcohol free since then (about 10 years) and have never wanted to go back to it. Absolutely no desire.

Me: So what has life been like since then?

Nancy: I got married to my drinking buddy and he has been sober for years now too. I had my baby, Daphne and she loves going to church. I started going to BAF shortly after I quit drinking and I got baptized there two years ago. I know more about the Bible and prayer now and God is in our life all the time. That is a huge change. God was never in my life before. I blamed Him for everything and didn't like Him. Now I don't blame him anymore and actually like Him and believe in Him.



Nancy and her daughter, Daphne