



# Bethlehem Aboriginal Fellowship

July 2022



## Land Acknowledgement

When a land acknowledgement is given, it recognizes that the land we occupy is the original home of our Indigenous People. There are a couple things inherent in a land acknowledgement.

Firstly we acknowledge that a wrong has been committed; that the land was taken from the first inhabitants, the First Nations People. Secondly, by acknowledging this wrong, we also acknowledge a right is being addressed.

For Indigenous people, the Creator is the owner of the land and it was given to them by the Creator to care for. Settlers and others don't necessarily understand or accept this kind of stewardship of the land because they see land as their possession. This colonial perspective is still very much seen and practiced today. Our race to the moon is an example: we stake our flags on things that really don't belong to us!

As we do a land acknowledgement we are in fact admitting these mistakes so that we can continue to journey on with all of our ancestral treaty signatories. In other words, all of us are still bound to work things out because we are all descendants of the original treaties. So in order to acknowledge a wrong, we also acknowledge that things need to be made right. This is one of the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. *Ps 32:5, Is 61:9*

A common land acknowledgement for Treaty One Territory (Manitoba):

"For we acknowledge that we meet and work on Treaty One Land, the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, Cree and Dakota people and homeland of the Metis nation. We are grateful for their stewardship of this land and their hospitality which allows us to live, work and serve God the Creator here."

Pastor Lyle Blackbird

## Our Community Outreach

Our church is part of our community to share with and serve others in the North End. With our new outreach ministry, we wanted to reach out to families in this community who have lost a loved one by giving them a pot of soup and some bannock. We started this ministry sensing this is what God wanted us to do but we had no funds to buy supplies. But God was at work. We went to a number of retail grocery stores in our community. Three of them gave us free gift cards of varying amounts. After explaining who we were and what we wanted to do, the manager of one grocery store told us we could come back anytime we needed supplies and they would be given to us as a donation! We were blown away by God's provision!



In December we made soup and bannock for a family who had lost a daughter to an overdose. Some of us women came together in the church kitchen and cooked the bannock and soup together. One of our women created a sympathy card that included an invitation to join us at a Sunday service. We dropped the food off at the family's house and had an opportunity to pray with them. It was very sad. Later in the winter a woman who had come to the church a couple of times died of cancer and we made soup and bannock for the family. In the spring, a grandma well known in the neighbourhood passed and once again we were able to serve the family with a meal and a prayer.

God is raising us up to be a church that serves families who are hurting because of the loss of a loved one. The Bible says, *The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.* Psalms 34:18. We ask God to continue to guide us as we serve those who are in need.

Rena Wilde and Beth Wilton

## **Man, it was hard!**

Hi! My name is Amanda and I have 6 kids. Four of them live at home and are teenagers and young adults now. I'm also taking care of my granddaughter. For many years I had been on welfare but now that my kids were older welfare gave me 4 months to find a job.

After many attempts, I finally got a job this past fall with a ministry to street people. I really wanted to be in a ministry so I was very glad for this opportunity. As the job was part time I was still on part time welfare. After a few months, welfare told me they would be letting me go for good. Two weeks after they closed my file, the ministry closed its doors. I'd been employed for 3 months and wasn't expecting the ministry to close down! I had very little to fall back on. Now I had no income.

I hadn't worked enough hours to receive EI. I got a job working a few hours a week cleaning the church, but it wasn't nearly enough. For 3 months I wasn't able to pay my rent or bills. Any money I earned went towards food to feed the kids. The bills were creeping up more and more as was the pressure. I was so afraid I was going to lose my home.

I was trying to trust the Lord but it was so hard when doors kept closing. I applied to a program that offered help to pay for utilities, but I wasn't eligible. I registered for a one time rent relief program that was a loan from the government that offered help to people in situations like me. But as my debts were now over \$1000, I was not accepted. I had to get a lot of documents together to apply for that loan and it was so discouraging when I was not accepted. At this time I also had 2 foster kids living with me who were high risk and wasn't getting much money for them. It was all so overwhelming at times.

I knew that Lord had provided for me before; at one point the kids and I had been homeless, and I knew He'd do it again. But there were points when I felt hopeless, abandoned and nobody was helping me. He kept bringing Proverbs 3: 5-6 to my mind. *Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.*

I started to do odd jobs for a landlord I knew – demolition, cleaning houses for him and I took on some cleaning jobs for other people. It helped to make ends meet. My church helped with their prayers and encouragement.

My landlord and his wife, who are believers, told me they wanted to tithe \$1200 towards my water bill. That was such a gift because now my debt was lowered and I could apply for the rent relief program. I was accepted and approved for a loan of \$2500 that went to my landlord.

One day the landlord that I was doing odd jobs for mentioned that he knew a guy at the Holiday Inn who was hiring. I got an interview and was hired the same day. I am a breakfast host and it is 3/4 time. I love my job – it is a 10 out of 10! It uses my gift of hospitality. I'd asked the Lord to give me a job where I would still be able to be with my kids, take care of my granddaughter and to keep going to church. He blessed me with all this. As well I am still cleaning for some clients and am interim secretary at Bethlehem.

Looking back these last number of months, I have seen things looking up but even if they go bad again, I know I can trust Him because He has strengthened my faith in Him.

*Amanda Flett*



**Once again** we would like to say thank you for your prayers. They are invaluable to us and we wonder if someday we will be able to see the results of how they affected our church!

And **thank you** to the churches and individuals who give to us financially. This enables us to continue to meet, learn and grow together, as well as helps us to serve our North End community. Our monthly expenses are around \$2600 – a challenge for our little church with many inner city issues. Your help is greatly appreciated.

*The BAF Leadership*

### **Make a Donation**

If you are interested in making a donation to Bethlehem Aboriginal Fellowship, you can donate safely online through our website, or see other options on our Giving page. [www.bethlehem.ca](http://www.bethlehem.ca)