



Bethlehem
Aboriginal Fellowship
Christmas 2022



Blanket Exercise

BAF decided we wanted to do something relevant for reconciliation to commemorate the second annual Truth and Reconciliation Day. We invited Living Word (the church we rent from) to help us host what is called a "Blanket Exercise". This is an interactive activity that illustrates how the policies enacted by colonialism have impacted and affected First Nations People. It is a retelling of the history of Canada from an Indigenous context that is not always included in the history of our nation.

Using a number of blankets spread out on a floor to represent the land, the exercise starts at the first contact between first nations and settlers. It walks through the broken promises/treaty negotiations, the Indian Act and the residential schools right up to the present societal impact of colonialism showing how damaging it was for Indigenous people. Slowly throughout the exercise, the land (blankets) are removed and valued cultural items are taken away. It is a very contextual eye-opening experience for all.

The scriptures tell us that the church has a "ministry of reconciliation" and a "message of reconciliation" as ambassadors for Christ. *All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.* 2 Cor 5:18-20a.

This challenges and calls us within our churches to do something towards finding ways to work at reconciliation.



This is also in accord with the #59 Call to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that states: "We call upon the church parties to the Settlement Agreement to develop ongoing education strategies to ensure that their respective congregation learn about their church's role in colonization, the history and legacy of residential schools and why apologies to former residential school students, their families and communities are necessary".

We were very pleased with the turn out for this Blanket Exercise. We had a full house which exceeded all expectations. Our hope is that as churches get more and more educated it would further help us journey down this road of reconciliation.

By Pastor Lyle Blackbird

An Invitation to Give

We often hear from our people, with shock in their voices, how expensive food is now. Many of our people though are still tithing which is amazing! Unfortunately it is not enough to cover our expenses which have been pared right down. If you are in a position to help us out financially, we would be so grateful. We know it is unusual for a church to request financial help in this way, but being a small inner city church means there are limited resources from our people. If you are interested, you can give safely online at CanadaHelps on our website: www.bethlehem.ca. Or you can send a cheque to 467 Manitoba Ave, Winnipeg, MB, R2W 2G4. All donations are tax-receiptable. Thanks so much for your consideration of this.

The BAF Leadership Team

Anticipation for Christmas . . .

We asked our people what they were thankful for when they think of Christmas ...

Thankful for family time.....Anticipating Jesus' coming.....my cats.....Jesus' birthday, family gatherings, eating turkey.....Christmas banquets, children and grandchildren.....family, friends, Christmas parties and snow.....a Light that shines in a dark place within dark times.....the gift of salvation.....thankful that I'm alive and that my fiancée is safe..... Talking with family and friends.....midnight mass..... God's gift of his holy son, our Lord Jesus Christ.....my mommy (5 year old who lost her mom this summer).....a Saviour that knows pain and loss..... The joy of Jesus' arrival

May your celebration of Jesus' arrival bring you hope and joy and a deeper experience of His love for you. Merry Christmas!



J & S Walk

The J & S Walk started in the neighbourhood by the church women this summer. We named this ministry after Jo-Ann Swenson one of the leaders in our church and Susan Huziy who loved being involved. Many years ago Jo-Ann began to hand out muffins and pray for people as she walked around the community. She was often joined by Susan. Both these women have passed away but it is their legacy that we carry on now.



We women decided we wanted to get to know each other better but didn't want to focus solely on ourselves. So we decided we'd go into the community giving out muffins and various pastries and offer to pray

for people. We had no money to pay for this ministry but once again God blessed us with two stores giving us either the goodies to give out or gift cards from which we bought the pastries. What a blessing!

So every two weeks we went out, mostly onto Selkirk Ave and handed out muffins with the church's name on the bags and asked the people we encountered if they wanted prayer for

something. It was truly amazing how many people said yes to prayer rather than no. The vast majority stopped and stood quietly while we prayed for them. There were requests for places to live, finances, their health, children, families and salvation. It was a real blessing to serve the Lord in this way and reach out to our community.

Now that the summer season has drawn to an end, we will continue to meet for fellowship, prayer for our north end community, Bible study, do some crafting together and be a support and encouragement to each other. *And I have been a constant example of how you can help those in need by working hard. You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: 'It is more blessed to give than receive'. Acts 20:35*

By Rena Wilde

