

2018 Elders Report

My times are in your hands;
Psalm 31:15

1. Our times are in Thy hand,
Father, we wish them there;
Our life, our soul, our all, we leave
Entirely to Thy care.

3. Our times are in Thy hand;
Why should we doubt or fear?
A Father's hand will never cause
His child a needless tear.

Author: William Freeman Lloyd, 1791-1853

The psalmist (King David) and the hymn writer realized that every hour of every day is given to us and graciously granted by our Father. Time is a precious commodity and one that we must use well, but perhaps more importantly the LORD orders and controls many aspects of our lives too.

Often we sense and acknowledge “Our times are in Thy Hands” when we grapple with the loss of a beloved sister or brother (such as Helen Konno or Robert Hunter) - at those times such a verse moves out of the realm of theory and into the realm of the eternal and the practical. However the psalmist who was still very much alive when he wrote Psalm 31, seems to see the Sovereign LORD acting continually in the affairs of mankind.

We, as a local assembly, seek the LORD’s active working amongst us as we consider His faithful dealings in our past and consider the uncertain (in our eyes) future. We give thanks and acknowledge the many blessings that He has freely passed on to us. We are thankful that we have been allowed to continue on as a New Testament church in belief and practice.

We are thankful for our brothers and sisters who quietly serve in a variety of ways: preparing snacks and coffee for our fellowship time, bringing meals for our Sunday pot-luck ‘picnics’, taking the time to visit and keeping in touch with each other. We are blessed that various people have continued to update our sign, work on the audio-visuals, cut the lawns, shovel the walks, faithfully clean and maintain the chapel –and numerous other jobs that need doing. We are thankful for our Bible study leaders and our Sunday School teachers, those who lead singing, and the men who prepare to speak each Sunday.

This past year we witnessed three young people follow the LORD in obedience and were baptized- an event that made us very thankful! We began Saturday morning men's breakfasts (with a big helping of Bible Study). As an elders board we have been looking at various ways to support the work of the Buitendyk family in Mexico, in addition to our on-going support of the Russells in Uruguay. And we have rejoiced to see the growth of the Grant MacEwan Bible study. In March we hosted elders and speakers from other northern Alberta assemblies for a simulcast conference put on by Biblical Eldership Resources. Other inter-assembly initiatives included: the Women's Christmas Outreach, seniors' coffee hours, the Edmonton Gospel Outreach, and of course, the work of Meadowlodge Bible Camp.

In the coming year the elders need to consider how Bethel should proceed after Frank & Dianne retire from full-time local Christian service in our assembly. We also need to consider how Bethel could grow. Lots of individuals come through our doors each week, and we believe that we are a welcoming and friendly assembly, and yet many visitors do not continue to fellowship with us - it makes us wonder if we are missing some ministry opportunity and how best to address this . We also acknowledge that the elders and deacons boards, as well as the Social Ministry should see new people being brought in and involved (within the clear parameters that the Scriptures lay out).

In all this we have lots to be thankful for - especially as we remember that our times are in God's hands.

The Elders Board: Dave Walton, Frank Parker & George Idema

Deacon's Report 2018

Each year we as deacons aim to provide a steady undisturbed environment for the Bethel family. Our goal is to make sure all the necessities are covered for the various activities and ministries of our membership.

2018 was a very quiet year for our building. During the heavy rainstorms of the spring we had a leak in the roof by the back door. It turned out to be quite inexpensive to fix, but it reminds us to keep an eye on the roof in general. The flat roof has some years of life left in it, but we don't want it to catch us off guard!

We replaced a fan on one of our several furnaces and continue to monitor those as well. We had our snowbrush machine serviced just in time. The company that sold it to us closed up shop shortly after returning to us. We'll have to find a new company for the next time. We thank you all for your prayers and support. Please remember that there are many duties required in our church family, and any help you give is greatly appreciated!

Submitted by the Deacons: Theryn Mills, George Bódy & John King

Social Ministry Report

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teachings and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer,... They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people.” Acts 2:42,46

The primary role of the social ministry at Bethel Gospel Chapel continues to be the facilitation of fellowship opportunities within the assembly through planned social events. In 2018, the social committee hosted a variety of functions to fulfill this mandate. Events in 2018 included the annual meeting luncheon, harvest luncheon, toboggan social, and the Christmas luncheon. Although there were fewer formal events, members of the social committee were very active in supporting the weekly opportunities for Sunday “picnics in the chapel” and “picnics in the park” on most Sundays after the Family Bible Hour.

We are thankful for all of our brothers and sisters who regularly contributed dishes and snack items for the coffee fellowship and the various lunches throughout the year; we are also grateful for all of the volunteers who help to serve, set-up, and clean-up at each of these events - these events would not be possible without your contributions to this ministry. As always, we welcome your feedback and suggestions for any future events.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Social Committee.

Sarah Tremblay, Sonja Idema, Nicole Poirier, and many other faithful supporters.

Sunday School Report

*“The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”
Romans 8:16-17*

Currently, Heidi Idema is teaching the toddler class, Doris Walton is teaching the preschool/early elementary class, Kirstin Idema is teaching the children from ages 6-8, and Melanie Idema is teaching the children ages 9-12. We have also begun a new class this year for boys, run by Shayne Poirier.



At Christmas, the children performed the Nativity story. This was a lot of fun for both the Sunday School to put on and for everyone to watch.

In most of the classes, the teachers have used the resource “Instant Bible Lessons,” this year. In Melanie’s class, the students have been working through the *Bible Project*. The *Bible Project* teaches that the bible is one continuous story that leads to Jesus. Students in the two older classes have been memorizing scripture as well.

Currently, the Boys Sunday school class is working through Hebrews 11, as we complete a series of character studies on “Men of Faith”. Each week, we are looking at the life of one man listed in Hebrews 11 and we are considering what we can learn from his life and faith. This has been a valuable study for the boys, who have enjoyed the opportunity to discuss what it means to be a true man of God.

The teachers have been taking a one week break each month at the end of the month. Thank you to Theresa and the volunteers she organized to help make this happen!

Thank you to all who have been involved in the Sunday School ministry this year. Whether you have actively participated or have prayed for the students and teachers, we have been so blessed by you! We pray that God continues to work in the hearts of the children involved in the Sunday school and that we as teachers continue to see God and the gospel story being at the center of our work. Please pray for us as we continue in our work.

Yours in Christ,

The Sunday School Ministry

Meadowlodge Bible Camp – 2018 (57th year of ministry)

We had a another wonderful year of overflowing blessing at the camp in a variety of ways, and are grateful for the faithfulness of our Father. His grace is amazing!

Meadowlodge ran six full children’s camps last summer plus seeing the 55+, Family, and College & Career camps well attended. In total, there were about 470 summer campers. The facilities were maxed out and the Lord provided all that was needed to satisfy everyone’s needs. The gospel was shared at every camp and those who knew Jesus as saviour already were strengthened in their faith. We are very thankful to God for those who made decisions for Christ this past summer. Please continue to pray for all the attendees, especially those who are very new to their faith. The Lord also blessed Meadowlodge with a solid compliment of excellent staff over the summer. In total there were about 100 volunteers, including eight from Bethel.

Josh and Sarah Krikke were able to manage the camp on their own this summer and did an excellent job. They have come away with a better understanding of the flow of summer camp ministry and will now process through what they would like to do differently next year. It was a steep learning curve but they worked through the challenges admirably. From all accounts, everyone really enjoyed working with the Krikkes. They have been using this off season to develop new processes for Meadowlodge so it can better serve its clients, campers and staff.

Financially, camp was once again able to meet all its obligations. Unfortunately, we did not have sufficient funds to have fellowship with commended workers as has been our practice for the past several years.

From a facilities point of view the camp is in generally reasonable shape. The major exception is the pool, which experienced its first public health shut-down in camp history. Thankfully the faults were quickly rectified; but it brought home the fact that pool will need to be completely replaced in the next few years.

Respectfully submitted by: Frank Parker & Bethany Idema

FOCUS

MacEwan University Discipleship Group

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.” Hebrews 12:1-2

Since last year’s annual meeting, when we first introduced the FOCUS ministry to the assembly, we have continued to make progress in our efforts to reach students with the gospel and disciple existing believers on the MacEwan University campus. At the last formal update, the FOCUS ministry was a small, informal gathering that met on campus for weekly Bible studies with a group of approximately 10 students. At that time, we were considering and praying about pursuing formal club status in order to increase our reach amongst the students.

We are happy to report that the Lord has blessed our efforts and continues to answer our prayers, as we seek to make his name great among the student at MacEwan. After last year's annual meeting, we further explored the possibility of obtaining club status, and prayerfully considered this with the students in our group. During the summer months, we completed the necessary application, and in September 2018, FOCUS was granted official club status as part of the MacEwan University Student's Association.

Since the beginning of the 2018 fall semester in September, we have worked to fulfill our mission to help students "know Jesus Christ, grow in his likeness, and make him known". During this time, we have enjoyed the freedom to engage in open outreach and evangelism on campus, where we have distributed countless gospel tracts, club fliers, and Bibles. Additionally, we have also had the opportunity to serve students by providing free snacks at outreach table events, and we have hosted an "Ask Anything!" event, where we welcomed students to bring their difficult questions and see what God's word had to say on the topic.

Since September, the FOCUS ministry has grown to approximately 50 members, 20-25 of whom are active members, who regularly attend activities throughout the week. In addition to our weekly Bible study, where we are engaging in a detailed study of the gospel of John, FOCUS now hosts two additional prayer meetings each week, which are hosted by students leaders. At present, FOCUS continues to minister primarily to MacEwan students; however, we regularly have students join us from the University of Alberta for our Friday night studies, and we participated in a joint discipleship night with The Navigators and one of the RZIM talk at the U of A in February. This year, by God's providence, we have also had the opportunity to regularly minister to a Dalhousie engineering student, who is completing his co-op placement in Edmonton, away from his friends and family. His participation in our Friday Bible studies has been a source of mutual encouragement.

We are thankful to the Lord that, by His grace, we have the opportunity to disciple students who are demonstrating notable growth in their understanding of the scriptures and in their maturity in Christ. We are also thankful that the Lord continues to bring students each week who do not know Christ as Lord, but who are open to discussions about Christ and the scriptures.

We are thankful to our Lord for all of the saints at Bethel who have blessed us with their prayers, financial support, and generous contributions of baking and other food items. We ask that you would please continue to pray for us and the students - that Christ would be exalted in and through us, and that university students would come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ.

In Christ,

Shayne Poirier and Steve Cortez