

BETHEL GOSPEL CHAPEL

We Preach Christ

Crucified † Risen † Coming Again



2013 ANNUAL REPORT

MARCH 16, 2014

Elders Report (2013)

Ephesians 2:19-22: Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Last year the Elders discussed an "ownership" principle in our Annual Report. We made several points in that report that are still true today:

- *When it comes to the church, however, we don't want to think of ownership in a commercial or consumer sense. Rather we think in terms of responsibility. One author has written this about the church where he attends: "we make a distinction between 'owners' and 'guests.' If you're not an owner, then you're technically a guest that remains to a certain extent separated from our church family, and separated from the maturity, protection, accountability, and care that comes with being an active part of the church. This may not make much difference for visitors and non-Christians, but Christians who consume rather than commit to a local church do a disservice to Jesus' body (the church) and themselves."*
- *Within the Body of Christ there should not be any outsiders nor onlookers.*
- *the Bible teaches that every Christian should exercise their position as Priests to God.*
- *An owner cares about the things that he or she owns. An owner takes responsibility for the success and continued development of the things that are placed within their care. Ownership brings with it a sense of having invested personally in something.*

Little did we know as we wrote those things, that although we view ownership of Bethel as often a spiritual obligation there are physical and practical ownership components as well that the Lord has tested each of us in.

As we all realize, over this past year we have welcomed the Salvation Army to use our facility while they build a replacement for their current building. The additional daily use of the facility has strained Bethel in several ways. The daily use has sped the deterioration of certain aspects of our facility. The shared use of Bethel has tested our ownership and our willingness to "share" what we have been freely given.

The spiritual component of sharing our facility (and the occasional inconvenience of this arrangement) has provided us with opportunities and challenges. Some of the greatest challenges have been in remaining hospitable to our guests. Some of the greatest opportunities are being able to share in the tremendous and challenging work this organization does in this neighbourhood.

Many years ago, some thought that with Norwood's continual decline that it may be time to operate Bethel as a storefront ministry (doing many things that the Salvation Army is doing now). By God's grace, the leadership of that day, saw Norwood as viable for church work and growth, an area where we could make a difference - and that if anything Norwood needed more churches that focused on proclaiming the Good News of the Lord Jesus Christ as found in God's Holy Word. Today, also by God's grace, we are seeing the benefit and the fruit of both types of ministry.

Just as the character of our neighbourhood continues to change, so does that of Bethel. While we no longer have a youth group, we are blessed to see (and hear!) the many babies and youngsters that are now a part of the assembly. At the other end of the age spectrum, we are conscious of the growing number of shut-ins and those with mobility restrictions. We see this

diversity of ages as both a blessing and a challenge, as we seek to become more conformed to the image of Christ.

Another aspect of our diversity is the English Conversation Café ministry, which brings out a steady stream of foreign students and immigrants – both to practice their English skills, and more importantly, to hear the Gospel and to be introduced to our Saviour. We are encouraged by the numbers who come out on Sundays, and come under the sound of the Word of God.

The proclamation and explanation of the Word of God continues to be the heart of our ministry at Bethel. Our desire is to explore the 'whole counsel of God' as revealed in the Bible. Thus our approach continues to focus Sunday ministry on expositional book studies, alternating between Old and New Testaments, with a view to understanding the Bible as one complete unchanging message to the world. We always welcome input and suggestions from the assembly regarding this aspect of our ministry.

As we look forward to 2014, we are conscious both of our weakness in terms of human strength, and of our tremendous potential in the Lord's almighty omnipotence. In closing, let us consider another portion from Ephesians (1:3-6) *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.*

Submitted by Dave Walton, Frank Parker, George Idema

Deacon's Report 2013

This year we have focused on maintaining the premises and several small renovations.

The front walk leading to the main doors was cracking at an alarming rate so we had it demolished and replaced by a professional contractor.

Several doors and locks were installed within the building to improve security for the Salvation Army's drop in group meeting in the basement this winter.

We purchased a snow blower to augment our snow brush machine. This is for use in heavier snowfalls that the snow brush machine didn't handle as well. To house the two machines as well as the lawnmower and minor outside tools, we purchased the steel container at the end of the parking lot. As well we added a small bit of chain link fence at the south side of the building to improve security.

Unfortunately our repairs to the men's washroom in the basement near the back stairs have uncovered some larger issues with our aging plumbing. We are currently investigating exactly what condition the old pipes are in, so we can then determine the next step in repairs and maintenance.

The Fire department has inspected the building and identified some items that need to be addressed to bring them up to code. We will be pursuing those projects sometime in the spring and summer when the building will be less busy.

Each of these projects, and countless others throughout the year, represent a significant investment of time for those involved. We extend our thanks to every person who gave up a day here or a weekend there to accomplish these tasks.

Ongoing financial trends continue to challenge our duties, so we ask for your continued prayers and support, that we may perform our duties in conformance to the Lord's will for Bethel in the next year.

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

Bethel Social Ministry Committee – Annual Report – 2013

Romans 12:13 says: *“Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality”*. This verse summarizes the goal of the Social Committee as we support activities at Bethel in a practical way. We trust that these activities help strength our relationships, encourage the faithful Christians among us, welcome those new to our community, and support individuals whether they be single, seniors, young families or anywhere in between. Some people attend our luncheons because they are physically hungry and others are looking for spiritual connections and fellowship.

In 2013 the Social Committee provided hospitality for a variety of functions including mission luncheons, memorial services, special speakers, brown bag prayer meetings, baptisms, Mt. Carmel at Bethel, toboggan socials, English Conversation Café, festive events and our weekly Sunday coffee breaks.

When we plan a luncheon, often the kitchen is a flurry of roasters, crockpots, large pots on the stove, with a group heating, cooking and carrying items up and down the stairs. When the warm water is in the sink, dishes on the drain pad, and time to clean up has arrived, the crew changes as others come down to get their hands sudsy. We really enjoyed the group of young adults who after the Mount Carmel luncheon were enthusiastically ensuring all the clean-up was complete.

This year we have condensed our footprint in the kitchen to share with the Salvation Army and appreciate everyone's willingness to manage in a smaller environment. As usual the Deacons are willing to provide us with the supplies and repairs needed to make the kitchen very functional. Whether we enjoy together a bowl of soup or a complete turkey dinner, we thank God for providing for all our needs. He is faithful!

Thanks to all the hands that set up tables, sign up to bring food, run errands, plan meals and assist us with all the small details. We trust that it brings you joy just as it does us.

If you have any suggestions for future activities of our Committee, we welcome your input and feedback.

Respectfully Submitted on behalf of the Social Committee:

Marg McKay, Miriam Love, Sarah Tremblay, Marg Ralstin – and many other faithful supporters

Sunday School Report - 2013

"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth." 3^d John 1:4.

As another year flies by, it sometimes is difficult to remember just how much has happened throughout the year! As always, the Sunday school class is active and alive! There have been changes, growth, and excitement! We decided that it would be best for our classes to gather together at the beginning of Sunday school to sing songs. There has been much excitement around song time, as we have growing numbers. It's a joy to hear children's voices and requests for more songs ("The superhero song!" a.k.a "The Lords Army"). In regards to curriculum, most classes have continued to use the resources from Discipleland – which have been useful. These resources carry a strong gospel message, along with notes about missionaries, prayer time, activities, and include a workbook for the students. At Christmas the children participated in a performance. Shane read the students a story while they were up on stage and later, they sang the intro to *Oh Come All Ye Faithful*. We have been blessed by our growing classes!

The pre-school class (ages 2-4) this year has been taken over by Tynan Seitz, along with Heidi Idema, as her classroom assistant. They are going through "See What God Does," currently in their class. They are kept very busy with their seven young students.

Steven MacPhail has been collaborating with Kim Buitendyk to teach their class this year (ages 5-7). Each teacher has been teaching with a one month on, one month off, routine. They have been happy and honoured to contribute to the students' spiritual development.

Melanie's class (ages 8-12) this year has been focusing on seeking God in everyday life and how to be a good witness for others. This class has also enjoyed learning a bit about David Livingstone through the Discipleland resource. The students have recently expressed their interest about learning further information about missionaries around the globe.

The school year has been flying by, but it has been a year full of continuous blessing! The Sunday school teachers would like to thank everyone for their prayers and support in this ministry. As we are continuing on this journey with the children we look forward to serving the Lord and the children in this way.

Yours in Christ,

Melanie, Tynan, Kim, Steven, & Heidi

ESL Conversation Café

Annual report – September, 2013 - March 2014

On behalf of the volunteers who faithfully attend and work diligently at the ESL Café...

The fall of 2013 was the beginning of the 3rd consecutive year that Bethel Gospel Chapel has hosted many people from many different parts of the world whose native language is NOT English. While helping them to gain a footing in Canada by strengthening their ability to understand and speak English as a means of normal conversation, we are also able to do that using English that is healthy and respectful, not full of slang and profane expressions as they might normally learn on the street. This is no small work!

It has become a privilege, a blessing, and a great sense of responsibility that has come to rest on our shoulders because of this service on behalf of the Kingdom of God.

The privilege is that through us the Father is able to touch the lives of so many people for whom Christianity was a mystery, a foreign "western" religion, and full of misunderstandings. The ESL Conversation Café has brought the world to our doorstep. We have been given a wonderful "Mission Field" opportunity, dropped into our hands. From China, Egypt, Hungary, Korea, Moldova, Morocco, Switzerland or Vietnam, we taste the cultural banquet table that the Heavenly Father lays for us each Saturday morning. The privilege has also burdened us with the inadequacy of our human abilities to fulfill the mandate of preaching the gospel. We sometimes struggle with the "language barrier" that lays within us, that of being able to properly talk about our God using words not steeped in religious tradition because for many of our students there is NO frame of reference in their native culture to even talk about the Living God as a Person they can know about much less know personally. But, as we spend time with these dear friends our actions have become the more profound ways of demonstrating the love of God. This makes the words we speak more powerful tools for God to use as these students see for themselves what true Christianity is about.

The blessing for us as volunteers is that we get to "watch God work" in front of our eyes. Not one of us can take much credit, except as simple vessels and ambassadors for the Kingdom of our King, for the ways in which God has spoken through us. We always try to keep a proper perspective on Who is in charge and He has never forsaken us or left us feeling as though our times are wasted. As we meet for prayer before each class time we are always sensing the great need to trust the Father and lean on the Holy Spirit. He has never disappointed us but often surprised us. Another blessing has been the strengthening of our own faith and love for the Lord Jesus and our Heavenly Father. We have been learning how to exercise our spirits, how to stand stronger in the Lord, how to abandon our fears and prejudices to the Love of God, how to trust the Holy Spirit. As volunteers we have been changed by the power of God. This is a marvelous experience!

(PS...If you're reading this and NOT involved as a table host...YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE MISSING!)

The responsibility on our shoulders has grown from simply helping them with English as a new language to walking with them through many difficult situations. Our students are not just ESL students; they are friends who bring with them many cares, many fears, many scars, many expectations and even pressures from their homes to succeed in Canada. Whether it is taking time to have a lunch with them, or drive them to various places, or even to call them up during the week to ask how they are doing; these friends are now a part of our extended family in many ways. They truly appreciate the kindness and support offered by us. Indeed sometimes we may feel a little embarrassed as they display honor towards us. Often we are chastened by the sense of dignity and respect they have learned to practise from their native cultures. As we meet on Saturday mornings the bonds of care and friendship are very evident. Their names and faces are often on our hearts during the week. A warm smile is always an uplifting welcome when we meet.

Another responsibility has been to search our hearts, examine our faith; get to know our God. He loves every one of our foreign friends. He covets their hearts more strongly than we know...or sometimes believe. This means that we are learning to see every Saturday morning as an opportunity to witness for the Kingdom of God, to seek to honor our Lord by being good stewards of His seed. This is primarily God's vineyard. We get to work and sometimes play in it. At the same time we know that it is not ours to do with as we please. We are called to this work by the Holy Spirit. We seek to respond in simple obedience of faith. We find pleasure and satisfaction in the work; seek no glory for ourselves. While as many as 45 individuals have been registered for this year, our numbers vary from one Saturday to the next. From as little as 6 students to as many as 22, the average attendance is about 13.

Our active volunteers are:

Margaret McKay, Margaret Bennett, Frank & Diane Parker, Renny Mackie, Niall MacTaggart, Robert Freeman, Shayne & Nicole Poirier, Song, and Paul Fletcher.

For years some folks have been active in doing door-to-door evangelism in the district around Bethel with little results. Now, however, God has brought a field to us, given us the means and the opportunities to be His witnesses inside the very walls of our building. It should be obvious that prayer is a much needed tool to fulfill this mandate. Everyone in Bethel should have the ESL Conversation Café on their prayer list. It should also be obvious that to pass up on the opportunity to get involved in the field like this is a sad mistake. Certainly not everyone has the means or the time to put some shoe-leather to their faith in this particular way. Nor is it expected that all of us should be a here on Saturday mornings. But if any are willing to take the risk, put their comfort zones aside, and step out on an adventure, you are more than welcome to join us.

Respectfully
Paul Fletcher

Meadowlodge Bible Camp – 2013 (52nd year of ministry)

Meadowlodge Bible Camp, in Strathcona County, serves as an extension of the ministries of the Edmonton area assemblies. We at Bethel are an 'owner' assembly, and are thus jointly responsible to the Lord for the administration and operation of the ministry. The other assemblies are: Capilano, Clareview, Westgrove, and Wyecliff.

Statistically, Meadowlodge ran a total of nine camps this summer, including Plus 55, Family, College & Careers, and six children's camps. Due to low enrollment in previous years, it was decided to run only one Intermediate Girls Camp in 2013.

The average attendance at the children's camps, not including Senior Coed Camp, was 35 campers per week. The attendance at Senior Co-ed Camp was 55 campers. Once again, the Lord was faithful in that several children confessed Jesus Christ as Saviour, and many others were helped to grow in their faith.

Financially, the Lord richly supplied us this year. The major project undertaken in 2013 was the renovation to the ladies' washroom, including the addition of sidewalks in this area. In addition, a ramp/walkway was installed for the men's washroom. Again, we experienced the generosity and faithfulness of the Lords people as the necessary funds were made available for these activities. Various other maintenance and improvement activities took place over the summer period.

With respect to the ongoing administration of Meadowlodge, the board is currently undertaking a major review of our governing documents (Bylaws), as well as the policies that govern day-to-day operations (Administrative Handbook). In the meantime, the Committee, in addition to its others responsibilities, is undertaking some new initiatives to better communicate and promote the camp among the assemblies, as well as engaging the younger generations in camp – as summer camp staff and also as committee members.

Respectfully submitted by,

Frank Parker

Board representative

Bethany Idema

Committee representative