



o Christmas | o 2009

Our vision at BAF is to be a house of prayer for ALL NATIONS

Isaiah 56:7



Dietrich and Edith Desmarais

KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH OUR SUPPORTERS—
PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Bethlehem

From the heart of

Walking Alongside

Merry Christmas to all our friends and family. We are happy to announce we became new grandparents to a grandson, Peyton Simba, born to our daughter Toni and her husband Oral, on Nov 7th.

God is always looking for ways to encourage and direct us. Your prayers are like a spiritual life water vest, keeping us buoyant. Thank you with all our hearts. We are encouraged that our salary is covered for a few more months! We take that as a sign from God to keep going. Thanks for your continued prayers and support.

We are encouraged through the promise of Luke 16:10 "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much." We keep being trustworthy with the very little. This is what we feel like God has given us a wealth of trust to care deeply for the hurting and lost. We all must give account Luke 16:2 of how we manage - even to the smallest amounts. God knows our hearts and sees what we hold the highest value. (Luke 16:15)

Your prayers are like a spiritual life water vest, keeping us buoyant.



We see how God continues to bless our ministry with front line hands of favor. As we look at how people are deeply restored from anger, theft, crime and traumas, I feel like God has mysteriously given us of His wealth to pour into lives that are so profoundly impoverished.

Thank you for being alongside us as we move forward day by day.

Love,
Dietrich and Edith

Muffin Ministry More than just muffins

I'd like to send Christmas greetings to the readers from the Muffin Gang! We are so thankful for the people praying for us. The Muffin Ministry has been going strong.

It is so rewarding to visit people each week. At one house, two little children peek out the door gleefully jumping up and down saying "She's here, she's here, the muffin lady", as they receive the muffins we bring to them each week.

We were also blessed with some beautiful quilted blankets provided for us to give to the people. A young mom and her three small children received three beautiful blankets. What a joy that was to give them to her.

Another family has been asking for

Jo-Ann Swenson

prayer to be able to move out of their house, and they invite us in each week to pray with them.

We are also thankful to Kildonan House for providing dozens of fresh-baked muffins weekly for us to give out in the neighbourhood around Bethlehem.

One of the older ladies in the neighbourhood had to move from her house to a high rise, but the muffin gang followed her there and we continue to visit her to her great delight!

I am also thankful for the faithful



women who join me every week, either to come out on the street with me, or to pray at BAF while we are out.

Continue to pray for us to persevere in this joyful ministry of giving out God's Love through the muffins. We meet new people every week, and will continue to go out with God's Love as long as He desires.

Planted Seeds

Much to Rejoice About...

Beth Wilton

Melinda and her family lived with me for a while. Melinda, 13, was terrified her mom would be killed when she was drinking on Main St. She wanted to go look for her if she hadn't come home by nightfall.

The first time, I suggested we pray for her mom's safety instead. I could tell Melinda didn't know what to do with that. I suspect she's never been inside a church before or prayed. But as she realized I wasn't going to let her go down Main St, she agreed.

I prayed that mom would be safe and that she would come home. Mom came home the next day, safe. The next time when Melinda was all in a panic over mom drinking, we prayed again. And the next time too. Mom came home safely, each time. But the next time I forgot to pray. Just as I was leaving her bedroom, Melinda shyly reminded me that I hadn't prayed for her mom yet. And so I prayed again. I could see in Melinda's suggestion a tiny seed of faith had grown.

Maria, also part of the family living with me, was having trouble falling asleep at nights. She didn't know why, but the doctor wanted to give her meds. I asked her if I could pray for her instead. I've had a few conversations with Maria about the Lord, but she doesn't really know what to think of Him. She hasn't heard too much about Him in her life I don't think. She somewhat reluctantly agreed.

She had a great sleep that night, falling asleep right away. The next night I asked her if she wanted me to pray for her again. She enthusiastically said, yes. A tiny seed of faith planted within Maria's heart.

Georgette, one of our first Work Force youth, now a young adult, could not do things on her own. Apply for school, ask for help in looking for an apartment, get her little girl into daycare....A voice in her head always told her she would look like a fool, because she was on her own. She'd get unbelievable butterflies in her stomach. Hence, her life was going nowhere.

She very much wanted to get into school, but just couldn't make herself go to register. I asked her if she'd like me to pray for her, if she would be open to healing prayer. She said she was. We prayed, with me not really sure what I was doing, but Jesus met her in a very real way. As Georgette was quiet and waiting on Jesus, He told her she wasn't alone. He was with her. The butterflies immediately left her stomach. She felt "pretty good" – relief. As Georgette listened to Jesus, seeds of faith began to blossom.

To these young people, these little things are huge in their lives. God at work in lives is always huge. I am so blessed to have these young people in my life – I get to see Jesus in them. Wow! As I celebrate Jesus' arrival this Christmas, I am so thankful that in my and others' lives, Jesus is very much alive and present. There is much to rejoice about!

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. Is 9:2



Jo-Ann Swenson

(for the food bank)

Bank

After a short break, Bethlehem Food Bank was up and running again in May 2009. Our Co-ordinator, Beryl Raven, did an excellent job of re-organizing the Food Bank, so that it is now running very smoothly and peacefully.

Beryl has a good group of volunteers, that consists of eight to ten regulars who come faithfully each Tuesday, Prior to unloading the Winnipeg Harvest truck and setting up the food, they all share in a Bible study.

We've heard from the clients that they love coming to Bethlehem Food Bank because it is well-organized and we treat the clients very well. We have been blessed weekly by Mountain Bean Coffee House with a large donation of muffins and treats, which we serve to the Food Bank clients to eat while they drink their coffee.

We've heard there is a waiting list at Winnipeg harvest to be accepted at Bethlehem Food Bank. The clients wait eagerly for their food, and also for the weekly devotion that we share with them to bring hope to their hearts.

We appreciate your prayers for this wonderful community outreach and for our co-ordinator, Beryl, who does her job so faithfully despite her struggle with diabetes. We are believing for total healing for her.



Blankets donated by the women's ministry group at Bonavista Baptist Church in Calgary

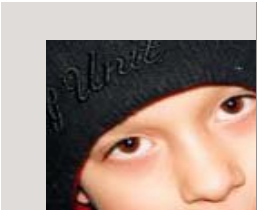
Understanding

Conflict

Jeremy Zehr

Did you know that Conflict is a misunderstanding, disagreement, or fight between two or more people? Conflict contributes to the daily stress of life. Many people avoid conflict. Some people aggressively attack conflict. Very few people enjoy or appreciate conflict.

We all experience conflict with others. Conflicts tend to be more encompassing in a teens life as an adolescent is discovering how they fit in, or are on high alert for being embarrassed or perceived to be a coward by others. I just had lunch with a 13 year old boy Matty, who lives just down the street from BAF. He told of numerous incidents where he had gotten into violent fights with other kids.



One time he was beaten up by some kids on a gravel lot. Another incident involved his temper getting out of control and he stabbed another boy in the leg. Not too long ago, Matty

found himself running away from some guys in a car with a gun. Matty says that it is often his anger that gets him into trouble, causing him to lash out against others.

Matty is similar to the kids we work with at St. John's High School. We provide a Conflict Group for guys and girls that are getting into arguments or fights at school. Like Matty, many of these youth lack the understanding and tools to deal with conflict in a positive way.

We provide these youth with some tools to use when they find themselves in a conflict including a "Stop, Breathe, Chill" approach to allow one to think before reacting. We teach them to stand up for themselves with dignity when faced with a confrontation and to do it without fighting or disrespecting the other person. We also give the youth opportunity to work through conflicts they have gone through or are currently in.

Through this partnership with St. John's High School, we have a great opportunity to get to know more youth and build relationships with them and share the good news of Jesus.



Wanted Church Secretary

As of January 31st 2010, Bethlehem will be without a secretary.

Our faithful and gifted secretary, Dee, who has blessed so many of us over the past 4 years, is finding it necessary to resign. The work involves about 20 hours per week: answering the phone (and sometimes praying with people who call in), doing the payroll twice a month, typing, and generally office duties.

For further information, call our Human Resource person, Beth Wilton at 204-669-4205 or e-mail hr@bethlehem.ca.

This is a position that cannot be left vacant if Bethlehem is to continue. We believe the Lord is calling someone to step into this vital work - - could it be that He is calling you?

Women's Bible Study

Mary Mitchel

Tuesday evening- it's the regular hour for our weekly women's bible study, and my living room resembles a disaster area. Scraps of paper strewn over the floor, an ironing board and iron set up across one corner, heaps of various colours of fabric piled on the coffee table, and on all available chairs - what is going on?

This fall, in our study, we've been digging into the book of Romans. But this tangle of bits of everything is not about Romans. Instead, we decided, as a group, to prepare an advent hanging for the sanctuary at Bethlehem this Christmas. The term "advent" is new to some, and we've been thinking about the concept of "waiting" and "watching" for the coming of Christ over the four Sundays that precede Christmas.

And so we've been learning some elementary techniques in fabric art, as we prepare eight symbols (two each week) depicting God's preparation for sending Messiah into the world on that first Christmas morning: a woman, an angel, the tables of the Law, a manger, a prophet, a candle, a shoot out of a dry stump, and a sceptre and crown.

We are learning more of God's preparations and faithfulness in keeping His promises; we're learning a new skill; we're learning how to read scripture aloud to the congregation; we're learning to co-operate to produce something beautiful for God. And we're having a great time together as we do all these things. Best of all, we're learning in a new way, to anticipate with joy, the second appearance of Jesus. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

Funding Alert

As of this January we will no longer be receiving funding from CBM.

We need your help.

This has a direct impact on the salaries of our Pastor and support staff.

Please prayerfully consider whether you can partner financially with us.



Special Thanks to the following ladies groups for sending us knitted goods

Grace Memorial Baptist Church
Fredericton

The Dorcas Group
Yorkminster Park
Church Toronto

First Baptist Church
Portage la Prairie

Whitby Baptist
Women Whitby
Ontario

bethlehem.ca

Please make all support cheques payable to: Bethlehem Aboriginal Fellowship, 294 Burrows Ave. Winnipeg, MB R2W 1Z6. If they are designated funds, please indicate on a separate piece of paper and not on the cheque. To donate online please go to our website.