



The Monthly Heartbeat

The Hope in Christ Church Newsletter

December 2017 Issue

Embrace

Enfold

Encourage

Equip

Exalt

When God Makes Things Happen

By Pastor Scott

I am ashamed to admit it, but as a pastor, too often I don't expect God to show up. My default is to trust in human systems and working the angles. It is a part of my fallen human nature. It is a lack of faith and trust. It is a sin in my life against which I must struggle, learning to take every thought captive and making it obedient to Christ (2Cor 10:5). How often do we expect God to show up? How often do we expect God to make things happen? How often do we look to God instead of looking to others? On November 14th, I had an amazing experience at the Chinese Consulate. It was amazing because God showed up and made things happen that I couldn't have worked out. It is amazing because in the midst of the situation, my initial response was to gripe, complain and think that the situation was unchangeable. But at each instance, God prompted me to pray, and to ask for prayer, and then he worked it out.

Here's how I saw God at work in a Communist Consulate: My family and I are in the midst of adopting a child. Because I am a pastor, the Chinese government requires me to make a trip to the nearest consulate in order to apply in person for my visa. I was informed on the phone ahead of time by a visa expediting service that though the consulate will make you an appointment, the reality is that the day functions without any attention being given to appointments. All applicants are treated on a first come first serve basis. So I caught the 5 am flight to Seattle and the 6 am flight to San Francisco. I took my first ever Uber ride with a Brazilian man from SFO to the Consulate's office. We had great conversation, talked about faith, soccer, and the places we would like to travel. I arrived at the consulate at 9:45 a.m. That was my first mistake. As I walked around the corner, I saw the line waiting outside, just to enter the building, ½ a city block

long. I started to grumble in my heart, and then I started praying. After a 30 or 45 minute wait outside (thankfully it wasn't raining), I entered the building and drew my number - 102. The counters were on number 30. Ugh. Being generally clueless as to what to do, I waited, thinking about how this wasn't a good idea and my chances of success were pretty minimal. After an hour waiting and only 10 numbers being called, I started to worry more. Then I prayed. I texted my wife and asked her to pray and within 30 minutes this nice Chinese man came up to me (after he has put all his biking clothes on) and asked me what number I had. I told him and he said, "I think you could use this." He gave me his ticket - 052. He then left. I found out later that day that my daughter, Bekah, asked God to move me up in the line somehow. **Answered prayer #1.** By 11:45 am I was turning in my visa application.

As I stood before the visa agent, I told her my story about flying in and the need to get a visa today so I could travel to adopt on Sunday. After the story, the gal said they couldn't get me a visa today, and that I needed to come back tomorrow. I retold her that I live in Washington State and flew in for this since we would travel for the adoption in days. I prayed. And she said, "Let me ask my supervisor." A few minutes later, she returned saying it would be ready at 2:30. **Answered prayer #2.**

I asked her what to do in the meantime and she said to not leave; stay in the building. So I sat and read until 1 pm when I realized the line to pick up visas was growing increasingly long. Debating when to enter it, I finally jumped in and worked my way up to the front. I got to the front at 2:25. It was 5 mins too early so they sent me to the back of the line again. At that point, I met a lady who worked as a visa expeditor. I asked her some questions and we enjoyed a half hours' worth of conversation. By 3 pm or so, I was back at the front and one of the last people present. Then it arrived; my coveted visa to China. The marvelous part is that the expeditor said she had

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never seen same-day service from the consulate, ever. **Answered prayer #3.** And to top it off, I was issued a 10-year, multiple-entry visa. It is what I asked for, but I had been informed that pastors normally don't get such unhindered access to the country. I seriously doubted I would receive it. In fact, I expected to get a 30-day single entry visa. Bot God made things happen. **Answered prayer #4.**

Is God able to make things happen when all the ways of men seem to stand in the way? Yes. Does God prompt others to meet our needs and further his Kingdom? Yes. Does God do more than we can ask or imagine? Yes. So the next time you are questioning God's power and the immensity of a situation that seems unchangeable, remember that you can turn to the God who made it all and still reigns over this world. It is God, not men, who makes things happen.

His love, his concern, his desire, his purposes will always be good.

Family Promise of Whatcom County Update

By Herm and Ali Laninga

The topic of homelessness has received much attention recently in the local media. As we walk around the streets of our cities, we see some of obvious effects of homelessness. Yet homeless families with young children are often invisible. Were you aware that:

- approximately one of every 26 Whatcom County children experienced homelessness for all or part of the 2015-2016 school year and
- this is an increase from one in 32 during the previous year?

Homeless families are sleeping in cars, out in the woods, or on the floors of friends, facing fears about how to keep their children safe and well fed.

Family Promise of Whatcom County is a nonprofit program committed to helping children and their families affected by this heartbreaking problem.

As you know our church voted to be involved with Family Promise, a county-wide effort to provide temporary housing for homeless families as a Supporting Congregation. You may also have heard Legacy Church, the church that shares our campus, has also offered to be a Supporting Congregation.

So just what will our role entail? Here's what the Family Promise website says:

"A Support Congregation is different from a Host Congregation in that it doesn't open its facilities to host families. Instead, the Support Congregation is partnered with a Host Congregation (in our case, that's St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Church just down the street) and provides volunteers to help the Host Congregation. All volunteers complete training and orientation before they begin serving. Volunteers can help with meal prepara-

tion, homework help, fellowship, etc."

A Support Congregation will need a person to serve as the Primary Coordinator **to recruit volunteers for the Host Week**, attend scheduled meetings (generally monthly) with Primary Coordinators from all the Host/Support churches and act as the main contact for the congregation. **Ali and Herm Laninga have agreed to serve in this capacity.**

Finally, a Support Congregation will be asked to offer financial assistance in support of this vital program.

The hope is to implement this program in Whatcom County by the end of March, 2018. Family Promise Whatcom County has already achieved two major goals: Recruited 13 Host Congregations and secured a Day Center that is being remodeled on the campus of First Christian Church on Bakerview. **Please be in prayer about volunteering for this opportunity to be the hands of Jesus to our neighbors who have fallen on hard times and need a hand-up. Contact Ali and Herm with any questions, (360-733-1415). Please visit the website: familypromisewhatcom.org**

Seafarers' Mission

By Pastor John Van Hemert

Thank you for all your prayers and help. Just before ascending to heaven, our Savior gives His followers the mandate: "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Therefore GO and make disciples of all nations..." Matthew 28:18-20. We thank our Lord for the opportunity to do exactly that. It is an open door with Seafarers in the gates of our seaports all over the world.

Praises and Prayers for the Salvation of the Lost:

1. Give thanks that a Russian officer on an oil tanker was open to the Gospel and welcomed a Russian Bible as well as an English one to learn of the Lord in both languages.
2. Give thanks that we could welcome twenty Filipinos who came, sailing a month, with a load of aluminum ore from Australia. Services of the Word and Prayer were welcomed. Bibles and Christian literature eagerly accepted with a lot of praise to the Lord.
3. Pray for them and their very distant families, for ten months a stretch. The last ship had no internet. Counseling care for stress and homesickness are readily accepted. If they are allowed off the ship we take them shopping, which for them is a big deal and for us a blessing.

What We and the Sailors Need:

4. a) Pray for another associate, or two, to volunteer for ship visiting.
- b) Christian and good magazines, DVDs, jackets, hats, funds for Bibles. These can be sent or dropped off at our office, c/o Hope Project, Seafarers, 205 B.C. Ave., Lynden, WA 98264

Preaching Schedule

12/3	Alvin Vander Griend
12/10	Ken Koeman
12/17	Scott Roberts
12/24	Scott Roberts
12/31	Scott Roberts

Greeters Schedule

12/3	Lou & Ev Kooistra
12/10	Deloris Perry, Denise Doezema
12/17	Lanny & Christine Speyer
12/24	Jerry & Faye Hop
12/31	David & Ida Richards, Junior Johnson

Cookie Schedule

12/3	None needed
12/10	Marilyn Kaiser, Connie Knutson
12/17	Melissa Koning, Ev Kooistra
12/24	Ali Laninga, Tanya Obbink
12/31	Mona Reardon, Darlys Recker

Serving Assistants

12/3	Abee, Amber, Mattea
12/10	Michal, Chantel, Kylie
12/17	Caleb, Faith, Amariah
12/24	Maggie, Zeke, Michal
12/31	Clara, Amber, Faith

Prayer Room

12/3	Ida Richards
12/10	Chuck Dean
12/17	Len Vander Woude
12/24	Jay Kaemingk
12/31	Lorraine Brouwer

Offering Schedule

12/3	Kingdom Advancement Fund
12/10	Kingdom Advancement Fund
12/17	Outreach Fund
12/24	Kingdom Advancement Fund
12/31	Benevolence Fund

Ushering Schedule

12/3	Don Knutson, Ken Wick
12/10	Len Vander Woude, Lou Kooistra
12/17	Joe Pruitt, Helen Bowman
12/24	Bud Brouwer, Ken Wick
12/31	Deloris Perry, Elaine Snapper

Children & Worship

12/3	Bekah Roberts, Mairi
12/10	Diane Button, Ali Laninga
12/17	none
12/24	none
12/31	Amber

Sunday School Schedule

12/3	Barb Zylstra, Darlys Recker
12/10	Barb Zylstra, Darlys Recker
12/17	none
12/24	none
12/31	Barb Zylstra, Darlys Recker



December 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 9:30 Worship & Communion 11:00 Sunday School 6:00 TAG	4 6pm GEMS	5	6 9:45 Women's Bible Study 7 pm Elders Deacons	7 6:30am Men's Support 7pm Men's Bible Study, Praise Team	8	9
10 9:30 Worship 11:00 Sunday School 4:30 Jesus Gathering	11 7 pm Friendship Christmas Program	12 6:30 pm Boer's Bible Study	13 9:45 Women's Bible Study 7 pm Council	14 6:30am Men's Support 7pm Men's Bible Study, Praise Team	15	16
17 9:30 Worship & Children's Christmas Program 3:30 New Members Class	18 6 pm GEMS	19	20 9:45 Women's Bible Study 1 pm Heartbeat Newsletter Deadline	21 6:30am Men's Support 7pm Men's Bible Study, Praise Team	22	23
24 9:30 Worship 11:00 Sunday School	25 <i>Merry Christmas</i>	26 6:30 pm Boer's Bible Study	27 9:45 Women's Bible Study 7 pm Worship Planning Team	28 6:30am Men's Support 7pm Men's Bible Study, Praise Team	29	30
31 9:30 Worship 11:00 Sunday School						

Happy Birthday!

6 Melissa Koning
 8 Eliana Ruiter

9 Mairi Bravener, Maggie Skovron
 16 Darryl Groothuis
 23 Ali Laninga
 24 Don Recker
 27 Brenna Koning
 28 Morgan Roberts

29 Doug Scholten
 30 Helen Bowman

Northwest Hispanic Ministry Report for November 2017

By Joe Strong

In the Hispanic community, there are many single mothers raising large families. There are a lot of reasons for this but most of the time it is because the man of the house runs off. This leaves an incredible amount of pressure on the woman. It is harder yet if the woman is undocumented. She needs to be able to care for the children and work at the same time. The children are the ones who get short-changed. Erika's husband recently left her. She lives in a trailer with her six children plus two that belong to her sister in Mexico. Erika, 32 years old, was injured on the job so she cannot work a full eight hours. Even working eight hours at minimum wage barely pays the bills. She cries a lot. Erika has been faithfully attending our church for the last three months. On Tuesday evenings at our Bible study in Mt. Vernon, I now teach Sunday School to nine or ten children, and Javier is leading the Bible study. Thank God that Javier is solid and does a great job teaching God's Word. Pray for Erika and thank the Lord for Javier.

Elias (Elijah) comes from a remote area of Guatemala. He has been locked up in the Whatcom County jail for four months. His mother is a Christian and Elias went to church with her as a child. Now Elias is reading the Bible for the first time in his life. The woman with whom he has two children only speaks a Mayan dialect, Mam. What a circus trying to get the children a passport! Pray for Elias and Francisca. Pray that his commitment to God lasts longer than just his time in jail.

I often share the sermon I preach on Sunday with the prisoners I visit on Monday. Philippians 4:8 deals with thinking on things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable and praiseworthy. What an impact these words have had! God has opened doors that have been shut for a long time. Man after man has told me that this has been one of their hardest struggles. I am often amazed how the light of God's Word penetrates the darkest places. What a privilege for me to be able to present what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable and praiseworthy. Continue to lift up the jail ministry in prayer on Mondays.

Nilda makes an impact for Christ wherever she goes. Her family has recently come from Venezuela along with several other families. She comes with a fervor for Jesus, speaks well and is a Spirit-led woman. God is using her not only in our church but in other area churches. Keep Nilda in your prayers. Blessings!

Items of Interest from November's Council Meeting

By Joe Pruitt

Members Present: Pastor Scott Roberts, Joe Pruitt, Rockelle Ruitter, Avis Kaemingk, Michael Boer, Terry Vander Woude, Don Recker, Lou Kooistra, Dan Obink, Lisa DeSalvo

Special guest Herm Laninga talked about his leading "The Story" bible reading event during the adult Sunday school hour; additional discussion during the congregational meeting.

Council is continuing the study, "Effective Leadership in the Church - Sustaining Pastoral Excellence in the Christian Reformed Church."

Council is considering hosting an intern from Moody Bible College; this will be presented at the congregational meeting.

Approved 2018 budget: \$224,758.00

Family Promise - Ali Laninga and Lorraine Brouwer to lead HCC participation team.

Strategic Planning Team (SPT) meeting Nov. 16th to discuss the next steps in the church vitality process.

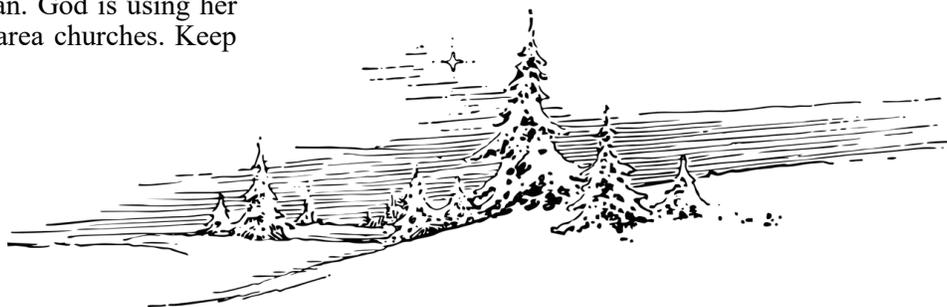
Discussion of safe ushering and church emergency protocol and procedures.

Giving in October 2017

	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>
Designated Fund Offerings:	\$ 13,612	\$ 54,383
General Fund Offerings	\$16,849	\$177,957
Rent / Utilities Income	<u>1,393</u>	<u>22,628</u>
Total Undesignated Income	18,242	200,585
General Fund Expenses	<u>(18,328)</u>	<u>(200,194)</u>
Income Over(Under) Expenses	<u>\$ (86)</u>	<u>\$ 392</u>
Total 2017 budget, including ministry quotas		\$ 222,173
Year-to-Date Budget for 10 months		\$ 203,659
Total Undesignated Income		<u>200,585</u>
Income Over (Under) Budget		<u>\$ (3,073)</u>

Loan Balances:

Classis: \$ 17,500





**Thank you to those who came to the Evergreen Christian School Veteran's Day Chapel!
We are so thankful for your service to our country!**

Pictured above:

Doug Scholten, Lou Kooistra, Don Vanderpol, Don Knutson, Len Vander Woude,
Nathan and Evan Boer,
Abee, Brenna, John and Zachariah Koning.



Children's Christmas Program

*The Hope in Christ Church Children's Christmas Program,
"Emmanuel—God with Us"* will be held on December 17th.
Dress rehearsal will be Saturday, December 16th from 10:00-11:30.

Friendship Class Christmas Program

Come join the Friendship class as they celebrate Jesus' birth with a program entitled "Stories of the Savior" on Monday, December 11 at 7pm.