

NEWSLETTER



AB, SK, MB, NWT, NU
Fellowship Prairies
Region



**Encountering God
Equip God's People
Engage God's World**



**Bethel Baptist Church -
110 Years!**
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Summer Sabbath

Mark Breitkreuz
Regional Director

Summer newsletter edition - has me thinking of summer! And although it's been a colder and wetter start to the months leading up to summer, that's actually been a huge blessing and answer to prayer related to the threat of forest fires we were hearing about.

What I'm hoping is another answer to prayer is this: that you may find a season of rest over the summer months. We're busy in ministry, and we often need that intentional calendaring of vacation time. My prayer is that you would recognize the importance for it, and that the Lord would provide grace through your circumstance to make room for it. Summer is often a natural time to have that provision. So may God bless you and your families in these

upcoming months. May you have time carved out that provide you with opportunities to love on each other and care for each other as family members. May incredible memories be made. May you find renewal and an energizing that sustains you. May you intentionally "Sabbath" in this way well. May God bless you all!



110 Years of Ministry

I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart;
I will recount all of your wonderful deeds.
I will be glad and exult in you;
I will sing praises to your name, O Most High!
Psalm 9:1-2 ESV

Pastor Arden Boville
Bethel Baptist Church



The words of David the psalmist from Psalm 9:1-2 certainly reflected my heart and the hearts and mindset of the congregation of Bethel Baptist Church in Winnipeg, on Sunday May 26th, as we celebrated with thanks, praise, gratitude, gladness, and exaltation, God's faithfulness to a few generations of our church family over 110 years of ministry!

The name of the church was changed to Bethel Baptist Church in the early 1940's and the congregation moved into its current building in 1948. The church began on May 4, 1914 with ten members and was called The First Norwegian Baptist Church. It was the only Norwegian speaking church in the city, ministering to the many immigrants arriving in our city at that time.

For decades the services were in Norwegian, but switched to English as many other ethnicities began coming to faith and joining the church. Bethel was founded with the assistance of The Swedish Baptist Conference, The Norwegian Baptist Conference of America, and the Western Union Baptists of Canada, but in 1955 became self-sufficient and independent. Bethel joined the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada in 1991.

As with any church, there have been high lights and struggles; one of the largest Baptist Sunday schools in Winnipeg in the fifties and two church fires, to mention a couple. But God has always been faithful to this congregation! Over a dozen career missionaries on four continents have been supported by prayer and finances over the years. Two of those missionary couples were commissioned and sent out from Bethel, with a combined seventy plus years of service between them in Chad, Congo, and Kenya, Africa.

Another dozen short-term missionaries have also gone out from Bethel over the years. We were the initial supporting and founding church of The Bethel Children's Home, an orphanage and school in Kenya. God has blessed us to be a blessing over the years and we praise Him for that opportunity! We had the privilege of partnering with other Fellowship churches in Manitoba to plant Mabuhay Baptist Christian Church back in 2005.

There is so much more that could be said. But it is impossible in a few lines to share the goodness of the Lord in the life of our church. But by the faithfulness of God, and proclamation of the gospel and the truth of God's Word, lives have been saved & changed, disciples have been developed & made, and Christ's Church has expanded & grown. And for that we exalt Him!

I praise God for the church family at Bethel and for the grace and acceptance which is extended to those who enter our doors. It has been my privilege to pastor at Bethel for over thirty six years! An aging congregation & facilities, and limited human & financial resources leave us seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit for the next chapter of Bethel's history. But we know God is sovereign and has a good plan and we want to walk in it.

Even is this, once again myself and the congregation can echo the words of David in Psalm 28:6-9.



Blessed be the LORD! For he has heard the voice of my pleas for mercy.
The LORD is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped;
my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.
The LORD is the strength of his people; he is the saving refuge of his anointed.
Oh, save your people and bless your heritage!
be their shepherd and carry them forever.

Psalm 28:6-9 ESV

Pastor Arden Boville, Bethel Baptist Church, Winnipeg, MB



Bearing Fruit

Kevin Miller
Fellowship International

Our Family served as Fellowship missionaries in Pakistan for one year. We returned in October for the birth of our son, Caleb, and because our applications for visa extensions were refused. Since Caleb's birth we have reapplied for our visas and are currently waiting to hear back. We hope to return to Pakistan this fall. Prior to working with Fellowship, I worked as a civil engineer. I left my civil engineering job in 2016 and for a variety of reasons like raising support, covid, and waiting on visas we didn't arrive in Pakistan until 2022. 8 years of our lives have been focused on preparing for and going to Pakistan with only one year of that time in the country.

Having such a long stretch of our lives dedicated to reaching somewhere we have felt called to, and with a desire to see unreached people coming to know Jesus, has left us with a number of questions. What was it all for? Was the year in Pakistan worth it? Will we be able to return again? Where is the fruit?

As I've considered these questions I've been drawn to John 15:1-17 "I am the true vine." In particular, I've been drawn to Jesus' statement "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." (v. 5) I've seen this passage in a new light recently as I've asked "What are branches?" and "What is fruit?"

I have tended to overcomplicate these questions in the past and missed the beauty of their simplicity. A branch, is simply, an extension of the plant. If Jesus is the vine and we are the branches then what Jesus is saying to us is that we are an extension of himself. To be Jesus' disciples and followers means to allow Jesus to continue to live his life through us. This idea is supported by the rest of the passage and is how discipleship is treated in the Gospels. The disciples were seen as an extension of Jesus. This is complimented by the idea of what it means to "remain" in verse 10 "If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love." If our role as disciples is to be an extension of Christ, then the primary means we have of knowing how Christ would act in our circumstances is by what he said. To remain in Christ is to submit our lives to him. This means allowing how he would respond to our circumstances to govern our own responses to our circumstances.

What then is fruit? Just as a branch is simply an extension of the plant, fruit is simply how a plant spreads itself. If we are branches, extensions of Christ, then we produce fruit by spreading Jesus into the world. If we are rooted in and submitting ourselves to Christ then we will demonstrate it externally to the world. Jesus' promise to us is that as we grow more like Christ and submit ourselves to him that the world around us will begin to look more like him as well.

So how does all of this relate to our time in Pakistan and our time of waiting for our visas? Well, seeing ourselves and fruit in this light helps me to take great encouragement from verse 2 "Every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful." Our time in Pakistan was a great time of pruning where we recognized areas of our lives that needed to be surrendered to Christ. In Pakistan we had to surrender comforts, our own plans and control. We grew incredibly in perseverance, in recognizing the power of the gospel, and in love for the people Jesus died for in Pakistan. Our trip in this light was incredibly fruitful. We shared Christ with others and saw people growing in interest and appreciation for him.

Our hope for the future is that Jesus will bring about in us even more fruit as we continue to submit ourselves to him. Whether our visas are granted or not we know that he is accomplishing this in us and he will be faithful to his promise that it will bring about great fruit.

