

# NORTHERN LIGHT

*The Official Newsletter of*

## **The Cariboo Presbyterian Church**

PO Box 156, Lac La Hache B.C. V0K 1T0

Visit our website: <http://www.cariboopresbyterianchurch.bc.ca>

**Editor: Jon Wyminga**

**Winter Edition 2016**

### **Annual Report for 2015**

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## **2015 Missionary Reports**

### **From Our Missionary in the South: Bruce Wilcox**

More than once while driving to or from yet another blessed time of worship and fellowship in one of our churches last summer, Jackie and I saw the most beautifully vivid rainbow. This got me thinking about rainbows - such a striking reminder that God is a covenant making and a covenant keeping God! This physical witness in the sky of His promise to Noah is beautiful, multi-colored, and yet one. And it pertains to the whole earth.

This also gets me thinking of how profound the Biblical description of all of us being different parts of one Body really is; having been made up of people called from every ethnic group, culture, and nation on earth: multi-colored, beautiful, yet one in Christ. The scripture (I Corinthians 12) also emphasizes the equal value and importance of every part. It's wonderful to witness and be a part of the operations of the various gifts of the Spirit given to each one here and the ways the Lord keeps building us up together into more of the fullness of His love and image; through bearing one another's burdens in prayer along with much self-sacrificial physical and practical support and encouragement.

So many different ministries and evangelistic community outreaches flow out of this as a result: Musical coffeehouses in Lac La Hache; an AA program; mid-week Bible studies, a mission trip to Haiti by Kathy Carter, one of our house church hosts; another house church family ministering longer term in Asia with Mission Aviation Fellowship; visitations; care and comfort for the sick and dying; and all kinds of ministry to seniors including regular church services at the Seniors' Village in Williams Lake, the Carefree Manor in 100 Mile House and (rotationally) the Millsite Lodge in 100 Mile House. Then of

course there's the Christmas pageants, involvement in Christmas food hamper projects for those in need, participating in ecumenical ministry at times with other churches, and all kinds of other good works that God has actually "prepared beforehand for us to walk in." (Ephesians 2:10). Muscular Christianity!



*(Worship leaders at the annual Rendezvous)*

The Lord also encouraged us with the baptism of four people in the lake at Lac la Hache last summer, as well as a number of other new folks who have been led to worship with us . . . exciting stuff! We had an awesome time at our annual *Rendezvous* last June for all our house churches which was held at the inter-lakes area and organised by our Sheridan Lake house church folks. They did a fantastic job! Once again we were also privileged to be invited by the community club of Lac la Hache to lead church on-site down by the lake at their huge annual Garlic Festival in August. The Gospel is going forth! Also, as Chaplain of the Forest Grove Legion I was personally blessed to participate with Ginny Alexander and others in a very moving service around

the cenotaph out there on Remembrance Day, where well over one hundred people turned out.

As I ponder the many ways God ministers His love through His people here, I am humbled and reminded that the word *laos* (the Greek New Testament word for “people” from which the word *laity* is derived) as the scripture uses it does not mean some kind of institutionalized second class of Christians, but rather *all* the people of God: one multi-coloured spiritual organism called and chosen and equally treasured by Him as a “priesthood of all believers”, each with equal purposes and roles to play through different gifts and opportunities.

Another amazing thing about all this is that it is through this one Body of Christ, which is His Church, that “the manifold wisdom of God” is being made known even to the “principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to His eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Ephesians 3:10, 11) Wow! The word “manifold” (Gk: *polupoikilos*) means something like multi-faceted in the way that many facets of a diamond reflect and enhance its beauty. So God’s variegated wisdom is also, you might say, “multi-colored.”

It’s incredible to think that each of us in Christ has been given individual salvation in order to then become progressively aware that we are actually part of something this great: to be the means by which God teaches the angelic beings, and in fact the whole universe, a beautiful, eternal, multi-colored lesson! Just like a physical rainbow reminds us of God’s faithful promise to Noah, which cannot fail, so we the people of Christ are like a spiritual rainbow that is a perpetual witness to the whole universe of God’s faithfulness to us in the eternal new covenant of the shed blood of His Son!

I would like to extend a huge thank you to everyone in our house churches here as well as individuals and churches across the country who are part of this important mission of Christ with us through your indispensable prayers and gifts of support. God bless you all!

**From Our Missionaries in the North:**  
**Nazko and Area Dakelh Outreach (NADO)**  
**Shannon Bell-Wyominga**

There are many aspects to this First Nations ministry that we have been called to in the Ndazkoh area. We often do events and activities together through the year as well as our individual house church meetings and visits to the Lhoosk’uz village.

In May, rather than participate as we have the

past couple of years in the Women of the North retreat, we held our own women’s retreat weekend at Ness Lake Bible Camp. The larger retreat had been cancelled and we were able to book the camp for ourselves with some funding from the Healing and Reconciliation fund of the Presbyterian Church. Fourteen of us gathered for the weekend, and though it was interrupted on the Saturday night by news of a serious vehicle accident involving the family members of some of our participants, we all had a great weekend, and with prayer the victims in the accident were spared their lives.

Two carloads of people made the long trek to Sheridan Lake in June for the annual house church *Rendezvous* where we said our official good-bye to Dave and Linda Webber, who officially retired at the end of March. Representatives from Punchaw, Ndazkoh and Quesnel house churches all attended and had a great time though it was more than a five hour drive each way for most of us.

As has become the tradition, we all drummed and sang our worship songs at the Aboriginal Day event in Quesnel as well as having a booth set up for the church and my crafts. Our church is now seen as an integral partner in the Aboriginal Day event.

This past summer was the first year Jon and I stayed put in Ndazkoh for the summer, and took our vacation at other points in the year. It was wonderful to be around for all the community events that happen during that time of year: culture camps, pow wows, and more bring people out. As well, people are generally outside all summer and a simple walk through the reserve gives lots of opportunity for visits and relationship building.



*(Summer sweat lodge building project with youth)*

Once again we hosted a Korean Love Corps team from Vancouver in the summer, having Vacation Bible School for the kids and a Feast Night followed by cultural games for the whole community. Our relationship with Vancouver Korean Presbyterian Church continues during the rest of the year through

Facebook and visits and we often call upon them to visit people from our community who are in the hospital in Vancouver. It is one of the ways we can be one another's hands and feet and presence.

Christmas can be a difficult time for many in our ministry. Low incomes which preclude buying lots of gifts for children and grandchildren alongside all of the commercial hype of the season can combine with grief from many losses to make it a hard time of year. In December we did two things to address this. Early in the month we hosted "Moving Beyond Grief" workshops in both the Ndazkoh and Quesnel communities. Herb Russell, a Gitsan elder and pastor, facilitated both two day workshops. They were particularly well attended in Quesnel with much healing taking place. The next weekend we set out to have Christmas fun. Both house churches trekked out to Barkerville, a national historic site, to enjoy a Sunday at Victorian Christmas. We attended the



Anglican service in the old church, sitting close to the wood stove in the middle of the sanctuary. We wandered the snow laden streets, watching the horse-drawn sleigh go by and browsed in the shops that carried goods from the 1860's. It was a low-key but fun way to enjoy the season together.

Each ministry point had its own highlights which are summarized in other reports in this newsletter.

### **Why Do We Do House Church? Jon Wyminga**

"Why do we do house church?" The question came up at one of our leadership team meetings recently. You will notice in this newsletter that some of us are wrestling with it. Of course many of us have a very clear understanding of why. But we also realize that not everyone connected with our ministry does. You see, house church is not just a small group. It is not merely a mid-week Bible study. And it is not simply a weekly prayer meeting. Naturally house church involves all of those things. And we welcome

those who come for the small group atmosphere, or the praise and worship, or the Bible study, or the prayer. But house church is so much more than any one of those things on its own. For house church is *church* in all that that word implies. We believe everything that God intends church to be, can happen in house church just as well as it can happen anywhere else. In fact in many circumstances it can happen even better.

When I first came to the Cariboo, twenty-one years ago and five years after this ministry started, house church seemed to be a very practical way of fulfilling our mission statement: "to reach out with the love of Jesus Christ to people who live beyond the traditional church in the rural and remote areas of the Cariboo-Chilcotin region." At the time there were, and still are, several churches in the major towns of the Cariboo. Most of them have dedicated buildings and some of those buildings are very impressive. But the rural and remote people of the Cariboo-Chilcotin generally have to travel great distances to get to them to worship God. Why not have church in a place where they don't have to travel? Of course we can't construct dedicated buildings for every small group in every remote community. So why don't we meet in someone's home?

I realized something else about house church when I first came to the Cariboo. It's not just a practical way of fulfilling our mission statement. It is also a very Biblical way to do it. Nowhere in the New Testament does the word "church" refer to a dedicated building, even though today the word is almost exclusively used that way. In the New Testament the word "church" is always used to refer to people; specifically the people of God. In fact the Greek New Testament word of church, *ekklesia*, literally means "a people called out." In the New Testament the standard place for the church to meet was not in a specially dedicated building, though that may surprise many of us. The standard place of meeting for the New Testament church was in someone's home. That's why when the apostle Paul wrote letters and greetings to New Testament churches he referred several times to "the church that meets at their house." (Romans 16:5; I Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 2; *NIV*)

As I thought about that discussion at our leadership team meeting it seemed appropriate, over the next few issues of our newsletter, to include some reflections from various people about the question: "Why do we do house church?" I'm looking forward to what people have to say. I hope you do too.

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# 2015 Elders' Report

Penny McIntosh (Clerk of Session) and Jon Wyminga (Moderator of Session)

The session (elders) of the Cariboo Presbyterian Church met five times in 2015 and had one conference call. Bruce Wilcox has received his license to perform marriages. At session's request The Presbytery of Kamloops held a visitation among us in April and gave recommendations. Colin Cross, the convener of the visitation team did a follow-up visit in June.



*(Baptisms in Lac La Hache)*

The session agreed to change the format of the Missionary Team's regular meeting. Rather than meeting weekly by telephone the Missionary Team now has a monthly face to face meeting and has telephone meetings as needed. All elders and house church leaders are welcome to attend the monthly face to face meetings which are generally held on the third Thursday of each month in Williams Lake.

Bruce Wilcox performed four baptisms in the summer in Lac La Hache for Buddy Felker, Nikki Bergeron, Riley Bergeron and Jada Neilson. Joelle Wyminga affirmed her baptism at the Fraser River in Langley on September 13 and told her faith story.

New elders are currently being sought by session. Anyone with suggestions can bring them to one of the elders or missionaries.

At the end of 2015 Kids Space left the umbrella of the Cariboo Presbyterian Church and has joined Williams Lake Youth for Christ. We wish them well.

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## 2015 House Church and Mission Reports

*Our area of ministry in the Cariboo encompasses a massive region within the interior of British Columbia.*

*There are nearly 500 kilometres and six hours of driving between our northern and southernmost points.*

*The following reports are from each of those points beginning with the northwest and ending with the southeast.*

### **Punchaw House Church:**

**Anne Migvar & Jon Wyminga**

Here it is, that time again to hear from us. We have one more family member living back out in Punchaw. My daughter Michie Wheat can't work as a care aid any more due to her arthritis. This is an unfortunate change for her work and her health but we are thrilled to have her back in Punchaw and worshipping with us. She adds a special something to our Bible discussions and fellowship and it's great to have her back after being away for so many years. We continue to meet every other Monday night for church with Jon Wyminga leading and several members of my family joining in.

We are not a big group but we are strong on prayer for family members and others. I had been praying for safety on the roads for my son, Lee Migvar, and the crew members he works with. He drives his own logging truck and two weeks ago he



*(Adventures in getting to church in Punchaw)*

stopped in at my house and told me he was lucky to be alive as a pickup truck hit him going 130 kilometres an hour. The pickup hit his truck on the left side of the front bumper. If it had hit in the centre it would have wiped his cab right out and killed him and probably the other driver too. As it was the accident tore off Lee's left front wheel and the pickup

truck went off the road flipping end over end twice. Fortunately neither driver was hurt – only shook up. I told Lee I had been praying for his safety and for the others he worked with for a reason. Praise the Lord!

### **Kluskus (Lhooskuz): Jon Wyminga**

On Wednesday, December 16 Shannon and I were planning to go to the village of Kluskus for their annual Christmas celebration. Miranda, the new teacher, had planned a “Community Christmas Variety Show” instead of the usual School Christmas Concert because there were fewer students this year and many of them were quite shy. It was a great idea!



For our part, I offered to show a movie clip about the birth of Jesus in the Carrier language and sing a couple of Christmas carols with some folks

from Nazko. Miranda was very enthusiastic. A few days before the event, as I was previewing the movie clip, I got up out of my chair as I normally do. Or so I thought! There was nothing normal about the way I did it this time. A streak of pain shot through my back and I knew I had done something very abnormal indeed. Over the next few days the pain got worse. On the day we were supposed to go to Kluskus I could hardly get out of bed. The movie equipment, the guitar and the Christmas gifts were all ready to load into the truck but I was absolutely not. I never imagined that it could be so hard to put a pair of socks on my feet. It looked like Shannon would have to go to Kluskus on her own.

Then, just before she left the house I seemed to find the strength to get up out of the chair, wash up, get dressed, get out the door, and hobble into the truck. The pain persisted through the day; through the next several days in fact. It was exacerbated by the occasional bump and awkward twist. But it was a privilege to share in that special event – to see the kids’ puppet show, to hear the elders tell their stories in their language, to enjoy the abundant feast and to share the story of the birth of Jesus – “the Saviour who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11).

That was my last trip to Kluskus in 2015 but I had been there every other week or so through most of the year; visiting, sharing and seeking to live out the love of God in whatever way possible. In the fall

the community welcomed a new teacher. Miranda Chitze and her husband Alex come from the Yukon and have settled into Kluskus like they have always been there. Miranda has a Master’s Degree in Education and lots of vision to make the school a hub of community activities. I’m inspired by their vision and energy and touched by their warm welcome every time I come.

There continues to be many needs in Kluskus but, through Miranda and Alex and many others, much is being done to respond to those needs. It’s a privilege to be a part of it. I look forward to seeing what God will do in 2016.

### **Nazko House Church: Raynelle McNab**

Once again the Nazko Home Church had a busy year. We saw God’s hand at work throughout the joy, tears, hard work, questioning, fear, refreshing and love. In other words, God was with us through everything. Our church leadership hit the floor running as they came off a much deserved rest.

Here are some of the highlights of 2015. We had potlucks, Frisbee golf tournaments, canoeing down the Nazko River, Grief Counseling workshops well attended in both Nazko and Quesnel, a three day women’s’ retreat, movie nights, outreach to Kluskus, and Punchaw. The Koreans from Vancouver Korean Presbyterian Church came again and the whole community benefitted from the Vacation Bible School and feast night. Shannon lead the Friendship Circle in Quesnel Sunday afternoons, prayed and visited with elders, and then hurried home to assist Jon in the house church in Nazko. We had drumming sessions and information booths at local events in Quesnel. Christmas gift bags were put together by church and community volunteers for every child in both the Nazko and Kluskus villages. We were invited to a school Christmas event put on by the children in Kluskus and the Christ story was shared during that time. A trip to Barkerville was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone and we were warmed by the service held in the beautiful historic church. The year ended with a bang with a skating party and snacks and games at the Band Hall at Nazko.



We enjoyed many activities which Jon and Shannon organized but their commitment and love for the people and the God they serve were demonstrated during quiet, heartfelt times when they sat with community members and elders, supporting them through grieving of suicides, addictions, untimely deaths, illnesses, upheaval in families, loss as well as the day to day events in life. We were also able to celebrate many accomplishments such as continued sobriety, birthdays, and welcomed healthy babies to our community.

Praise God for He is so good.

### **Ndazkoh Kids Bible Class: Shannon Bell-Wyminga**

Every time I dare to step into the hallways of the Ndazkoh school, I hear voices in the classroom exclaiming my name, and a few escaped students rush into the hall to give me a hug and ask the same question: “Is it Bible Class day?” One of the older students always begs to come to the little kids’ class just so he can come twice as often. It is a joy to work with these kids who have so much enthusiasm. It is always a huge disappointment to have to cancel classes when one or both of us have to be away for other ministry reasons – and unfortunately that has been happening more often. Most of the kids in the school are registered for Bible Class again this year. Each week we play games, eat together and visit, sing songs, hear a Bible story, have a prayer circle and then do games and activities and crafts until it is time to go out for the bus home. The newest addition to Bible Class is two Native puppet children, one boy and one girl, who have become friends of the kids and together tell the stories. The kids *love* these two new friends. Suzi Wusnuk (Dakelh word for *crazy*) and Beni Hooloh (Dakelh word for *lost his mind*) are now real favourites each week. I’ve been enjoying speaking through the puppets and seeing the way the kids interact with them.



At Christmas we were able once again to deliver gifts to all the kids in both the Ndazkoh and Lhoosk’uz

villages. These gifts are sent by churches and groups across BC and Ontario. The Sunday School kids of

Calvin Church in Abbotsford raised funds and personally purchased the bulk of the gifts we had this year. They also made personal cards to give to each of our kids. We hope to reciprocate at some point in this year and send them cards or letters from our Ndazkoh kids. We have also been blessed with many people knitting wonderful hats, mitts, toques and socks which are very appreciated for each child. One parent told me she was moved to tears when her daughter received her gift at Christmas.

### **Quesnel Dakelh Fellowship:**

**Shannon Bell-Wyminga**

This year marked a change once again in the ministry in the Quesnel area. For three years we had shifted from having a house church to a talking circle ministry at the local shelter – Season’s House. After some prayer while on our leave of absence, I realized that the shift away from house church had left some of our members without regular worship and discipleship. While the ministry at Season’s House was important, I felt that the need for encouraging and growing with our Jesus followers from the Dakelh nation needed to be the priority. The house church was renewed, bringing with us one regular member of the talking circle.

Through the year we have tried different approaches to our worship time to make it more participatory. We open our singing time to include sharing ways we have seen God at work in the past week in our lives. We usually have one passage of scripture that we study together asking three questions: What is my first response to this passage – what does it make me think or feel or wonder about? How can I identify with the main character in this story – am I like them or unlike them? What does this passage say to me about how I live and experience my faith? In the Fall, we have been focusing on stories of women in the Bible, alternating between Old and New Testaments.

We were sad to say good-bye to our sister Volney in the summer as she moved back to Vancouver to care for her elderly father. Our group remains small but we are glad to be able to gather, to learn and to pray together for our families. We have seen children and grandchildren experience healing from addictions, have babies, and work through various struggles in their lives. We have also continued to drum together with the Ndazkoh house church at local events.

## **MacAlister-McLeese Lake House Church:**

**Clarence Colp**

I'll never forget the feeling of moving from the city of Kamloops to Marguerite, just north of MacAlister. In Kamloops we knew our way around, had friends, and were comfortable but now we've moved to a community that doesn't even have a sign recognizing it and only one road going north and south. We knew we wanted to get out of the city and all of a sudden, here we were with no friends and no contacts.



One day I went to the Oasis restaurant, where I quickly learned that's where to go to get all the local news. I was told of a house church that meets in the area and about Colin and Kathy Carter, so we went to visit them. That was almost nine years ago. We were invited to worship and fellowship with them on Tuesday evenings and have been doing so every week since. House church has given us the sense of belonging, a sense of being accepted, and opportunities to minister within

the community.

Our son Samuel loves the fact that he gets to play his saxophone every week with the music team at our worship. We are blessed with wonderful music that includes guitars and Paul Noble on violin, and other instruments at times.

Our goal is to reach the community with the gospel of Jesus Christ and to encourage each other to grow in Him. We have been so blessed by the friendship that has developed between us: the Carters, the Nobles and other families in our fellowship. We thank God for the leadership ministry of Dave Webber and now, for the past year, of Bruce Wilcox who untiringly and unselfishly drives from home to minister the Word to us and visit with us week after week in rain, shine, or snow.

Our group is very active and proactive as we seek ways to minister and share the gospel. We are involved in community Christmas Dinners and Mother's Day Dinners as well as weekend camp meetings in McLeese Lake. Each year we get together to do Christmas caroling in our area. We often have potluck meals together as a group and help each other in the areas of getting firewood and

looking after each other's property and animals when we're away.

Our house church has also been used for baby showers, and mobile "surprise" house warmings, including our new pastor and leader Bruce Wilcox and his wife Jackie. Keeping in touch with others in sickness or need in our community is also a big part of our ministry.

In conclusion I will quote Tiny Tim, "God bless us, each and every one."

PS: We also had a busy and exciting summer last year with weddings in the Carter and Noble families. Congratulations to Mark Carter and Alicia, John Carter and Emily, Joe Noble and Paula, and Mary Noble and Vadim!

## **Williams Lake House Church: Elizabeth James**

2015 held both great joy and great sorrow for the members of our house church.

Ginny Alexander and Bob McIntosh have been sharing the duties of our services and we wish to thank them both for some enlightening and thought provoking sermons during the year. Our church now includes the Senior's Village on the first and third Sunday of each month and we all enjoy seeing our members who live there.



During the summer some of our members attended the *Rendezvous* at Sheridan Lake. It was a great time with outdoor games for the children and adults; great food; and wonderful fellowship. Peter and I travelled there with Mary Cornish and we had a lively discussion on a variety of topics. To our great sorrow Mary left this earth to enter the Kingdom of God on July 24th. We miss her dearly.

We also lost Barbara Gibson (Penny McIntosh's mother) on December 21st when she also returned to the Father. Her smiling face is also missed dearly.

Our house church continues to support our World Vision children and our members are active volunteers here in Williams Lake.

In 2016 we are going to be active in increasing our membership and towards that goal we wish to welcome Kathy Walker to our congregation.

### **Springhouse-Williams Lake House Church:**

#### **Reg Steward**

Our group continues to meet at varied homes in the Williams Lake-Springhouse catchment areas with a faithful core of fifteen plus attending each Sunday morning. Our meeting starts with musical worship and continues through a time of community prayer and into an imported teaching from some of the finest Bible teachers available in this vast electronic world. We also praise the Lord for the “Concert with a Cause” in which the Lord used Isaac, Jesse, Jacob and Seth Steward and their friend Lyndon Froese to raise funds for well water projects abroad. Our group supported them in this cause.



2015 was a year of challenge and of growth. It was a year of loss in many ways; some loved ones passing on, others moving on. This year past may in some ways be best described as “restless.” Some have questioned the methodology and the purpose of home churching. Some have left seeking and desiring the opportunities afforded by a church with many more people and offering services and activities that will not ever be part of or available within the home church movement. As a true alternative to other forms of church on a Sunday morning perhaps this is a challenge and it is good to be forced to ask the question, “Why do we do what we do?” It is valid that people would know why we do what we do. Many home churches within the home church movement at large, and perhaps even our own, meet on nights and at times other than during the historical Sunday morning time. Upon examination some of those may well find that they have people, perhaps

the majority of people, in their midst for whom home church is more of an elevated, alternative to or a substitute for, a midweek Bible study than it is in reality their church. This very thought has caused us to ask the questions that need to be asked about this alternate style of meeting, learning, growing and worshiping. It has challenged us to understand and then to see the need to teach how important it is that we are very clear about why we home church. It has become clear, and the restlessness of the past year has been a tutorial in reminding us, that we cannot presume upon a commonality of understanding, nor languish in past teaching, nor rest upon a united understanding of knowing why we meet as we do. We shall, and perhaps we all should ensure that we are clear in this. Why do we do what we do? This shift in our gathering of some new people coming and going, the reality of having some leave for larger traditional settings and some contemplating other options, has awakened us to the need to be much more intentional and much better at understanding and teaching and at grasping the rational, the goals, the history, the purpose and Biblical support for such a movement as a home church. With those who are committed to this we press onward.

Our meetings continue to include a post service shared meal with some visiting after as occasion, weather, activities and the growing little ones enable. God is teaching us in this time. We need to stand for the truth of the written Word of God, sufficient and unchanging. This is a reminder to all of us even as the Presbyterian denomination at large currently works through some issues of doctrine and matters of practice at the national level. It is in these times that God shapes and molds us. It is in these times when we need to, and must, rely fully and only upon Him. In short it is then, at that moment when we come to the end of ourselves, the end of our ability to pull the right lever and “make it happen” that we are met by God and are reminded that “God is on it.” It is then, and only then that we come to full awareness and that glorious comfort that God is on the throne, that He is in control and that it is all in hand.

Our task then is to be faithful to the Word. While it is arguable that faithfulness to a style of meeting or service is in many ways negotiable, faithfulness to the Word is not ever. In and of itself this difference of how we meet need not separate us from brothers and sisters, does not need to alienate us from any true follower of Christ nor to dislodge us from those who worship in other settings or amidst an



alternate design. When we meet may it be for all of us with the right attitude and the humbled heart of worship. When we assemble may it be not be for the purpose of isolating and secluding. When we gather may it be that we find a pool wherein we find support, encouragement and hope. And when we meet may it be that we would do so for the expressed purpose of glorifying our Saviour and the living God of creation, sanctifying ourselves for His service, doing His bidding, learning and embracing the truths of holy scripture. God is on it. He is the one who will subdue all things to Himself.

May it be that in our restless times we are indeed challenged to ask and answer the tough questions. May it be that our gatherings are not the Everest of the recluse nor the glass castle of the arrogant. May it be that it is with humility of mind and with singleness of purpose that we would bend and prostrate our sin wrought selfish personage before Him and seek constantly His guidance, His direction and His mercy. Saved that we might serve, taught that we might teach, rescued that we might reach and humbled that we might help.

Paul Tripp writes, "The regular gathering of God's people for worship serves to shift your meditation from complaint to gratitude by reminding you of who you really are and confronting you with the beautiful and faithful mercy of God toward you. As the gospel puts you in your place it also puts praise in your mouth, and that is a very good thing."

It is our sincere hope and prayer, both for our group and each other one, that we are able to be a people of gratitude, aware of whom and whose we are, basking in the mercy of our loving, life giving and forgiveness providing God. That we would collectively be known as a consecrated people who arise each day aware of the glorious gospel as it radiates light into every shadow of our day and ever threads joy into each and every moment of our life. Oh that we would personify the reality that the gospel is not a one-time rear-view mirror experience, that it is not simply nor solely found to reside in the recesses of our mind as that snapshot in time when dead, not wounded, in our sin He awakened us to the infused new life and the righteousness of His saving grace. Let it always be seen of us and ours to know and to celebrate and live out the reality that the gospel is a pair of Biblically prescribed glasses through which all things must be viewed.

## **Lac la Hache Community Church:**

### **Sharon Hutchinson**

Well, it's been an exciting year at our church in Lac La Hache. We've seen our numbers grow again in 2015 and we welcome all our wonderful new people! We have another alternate piano player now as well, so that adds to our music time in worship which is always a blessing, and I'm sure God is happy with our musical offerings.

Pastor Bruce Wilcox continues to bless us with such rich teaching from the Word that gives us a deeper understanding of the One who created us in His image. Ginny Alexander filled in when Bruce and Jackie were on holidays, and I was honoured to be asked to speak one Sunday too. I now realize what a lot of preparation goes into doing a message each Sunday, and how we need the Holy Spirit to guide us!

In the summer we had a really exciting event at the Lac la Hache beach. Bruce baptized our dear Jaida Neilson, and Bubby Felker and his daughter Nikki Bergeron, and grandson Riley. It was an awesome



time followed by a feast, and I mean "feast", at the picnic shelter. Other people in the park even stood by listening to the message Bruce shared. Wow!

Our feasting set a pattern: Every few months we have lunch after Sunday services at the hall of the Old Age Pensioners Organization in Lac la Hache. It has already gone well, and we're preparing for another soon. It's a great time to invite friends and neighbours to share all this with us. We can also invite them to take in events like our church sponsored bi-monthly coffeehouse evenings, also held at the OAPO hall, where the community can enjoy a free evening of great local musical talent, coffee and goodies.

Christmas brought us together to decorate the church and enjoy hot drinks and carol singing. The Christmas Eve service literally filled the church, ending with all of us singing "Silent Night" by candlelight. It was a beautiful time. We're also blessed with Onno VandenHoek now leading a weekly mixed Bible study evening at the church. It just keeps getting better here!

Thank you Lord for Your blessings as we long to follow You faithfully.

**Carefree Manor, 100 Mile House: Maggie Wiens**

Life can be full of challenges, overwhelming situations, trials, persecutions, sufferings and for some believers, even death in some countries where they are involved in missionary witnessing for Christ. Without trials exercising our faith, how does one's character and nature become more Christ-like (Job 23:10, 1 Peter 4:12-13)? Despite various difficulties believers are faced with, God can take what the devil means for harm and turn it around for our good and His glory. (Rom. 8:28, Gen. 50:20). It doesn't make every trial suddenly disappear or easy but the burden is lighter knowing that He is helping us to carry it and is *always* working it for our good to those who love Him. Yes, what father does not desire the best for their children and uses tough love at times to help teach, correct and guide them into becoming a more mature and selfless human being, one who takes what they have learned and applies it in their lives. Like a father and his child, the child still has free will but has been given rules, guidelines and boundaries to help them make wise decisions, helping them to walk in right attitudes and to respond appropriately rather than react out of selfishness or hurt feelings. Like any caring earthly father, our Heavenly Father disciplines and chastises those whom He loves for God is love and love never faileth (Prov. 3:12, 1 Cor. 13:8.) We must just keep trusting the Lord in all circumstances (Job 13:15) of our lives, being content and grateful in *all* things . . . waiting on God, keeping the faith and knowing that He is always in control despite how things appear to us.

This old world is reeling to and fro with an increase in earthquakes, floods, fires, hurricanes, tornadoes, violence and terrorism, etc., and yet, none of these things happen without God's hand being in it, divinely allowing it. That being said, it doesn't mean we should have a defeated attitude but instead, it should encourage us to pray even more fervently for others, this world, our enemies and those who spitefully use or persecute us, and most importantly, for lost souls. It is faith that pleases and moves the heart and hand of God so may we not grow weary in praying effectual, fervent prayers on behalf of ourselves and others (James 5:16, Gal. 6:9).

We serve an amazing God who does not desire that any should perish. He has given us the promise of eternal life through the blood sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ (John 3:16).

Remember, 'today' is the day of salvation. We are not promised tomorrow, so why hesitate in asking Christ to forgive and cleanse you from your sins? Why delay in making the most important decision of your life, affecting not only life here on earth, but life eternal? Yes, today is the day of salvation and though God is ultimately in control, He desires a willing heart that will choose to love Him and live for Him with all of their heart, soul, mind and strength. I urge any who have not already chosen to accept Christ into their heart and life to do so sooner rather than later. Choose Christ! Choose Life!!!

*A note from Bruce: Maggie ministers regularly with her musical gifts, help and visitations to many folks in our local Seniors' care facilities. Huge thanks also to missionary Ginny Alexander for filling in here and elsewhere in our churches when needed, and once again writing and putting on a great Christmas Pageant at the Manor with the kids!*

**Forest Grove Community Church: Marlis Zabel**

Having moved last year to the Cariboo from the Fraser Valley we found ourselves looking for a home church. We noticed a sign up at the Forest Grove Legion saying there was church on Sunday evenings and we thought we would stop in sometime.

Dennis and I immediately felt drawn to this small group as there was a real sense of community and joy and have been happy to attend regularly. We have a wonderful time when Bruce leads singing, playing on his guitar, joined by Brian on his tambourine, Dennis with some harmonica, and voices. We really enjoy Bruce's messages as he adds a lot of background information. For example, the studies often include the Greek or Hebrew origins of words and the history of the time. This greatly adds to our understanding of the chosen text. The sermons are practical and applicable to our everyday lives.

Prayer times continue to encourage us to develop our relationship with God in bringing our requests to Him and interceding for others. We are encouraged to bring along our prayer requests. Members of the group are remembered in prayer if they are ill or in need. Our prayers also encompass the community of Forest Grove and events in the world.

We feel our times of discussion in the Word and our prayers contribute to developing a sense of oneness with each other and with God. Coffee times after the service are enjoyable as we get to know members of the group on a more informal basis.

We're very much blessed having this church in our community and love being a part of it!

**Sheridan Lake House Church: Jody Malm**

*"What a gift!"*

Oh I am going to be late. I am going to come in at a time that doesn't seem to be the *right* time. Coming in right at the beginning would seem to be the best. But once again I won't do it. Sometimes the music has started and songs are being sung. Sometimes the Word is already being shared. Oh, and sometimes I come in, say a couple of things, and then I leave. It's Wednesday Night House Church.

Do I feel ashamed or unwanted or made to feel guilty? I must share with you, I never do. Never! Maybe I should, but I don't. I feel loved by my house church family and friends. I feel understood and cared for and wanted. Never do I feel judged.



In all honesty I had never thought about this until one day after work. I was heading home and a friend said "You're going to be late for house church, you better hurry." I said, "That's ok," and smiled, jumped into my rig and I started it up. I heard her say, "Really?" By the way she said it I realized she was very surprised – almost shocked. Then two things happened. First, I realized I was given an open door, so I told her all about our house church and about the kindness and grace that happens there. She shared how special that was . . . and she is *right!*

The second thing that happened was I realized something. "What a Gift;" a gift that I may have been taking for granted. I get to join our house church family and we come together freely and unconditionally. We have music, which opens our minds and our hearts to hear the Word of God. We have prayer times where we can open up and share all that we want aloud or in the quiet of our hearts. Our house church holds each other safe and secure and there is a "knowing" that we are being listened to and validated. *What a gift!*

Last but not least there is fellowship, coffee and stories, lots of love and laughter. *What a gift!*

God is in all our lives. God is working in us and we are exactly where God wants us to be and right now I am thanking God for this gift I receive weekly from my family in Christ – The Sheridan Lake House Church.

Thank you and blessings, jody

**Kids' Space Group, Sheridan Lake: Elaine Adams**

**Mission Statement:**

*Jesus heard about it and spoke up, "Who needs a doctor: the healthy or the sick? I'm here inviting outsiders, not insiders - an invitation to a changed life, changed inside and out."*

*(Luke 5:23, The Message)*

In 2015 Kids Space Group became just that: instead of just one or two programs for children and teens there were three and KSG became a group of programs. Kids Space included Little Kids Space in their bimonthly meetings. The good thing about this was the parents stayed with the children under four years of age. This meant more adults and workers. The third program, Teen Space, is well attended by the youth in Interlakes. Seventeen to eighteen teenagers attend meetings. That's just about all the teens in the area. Inviting outsiders to a changed life is having a passion for Jesus and sharing this passion sensitively and gently. Waiting is also an important part of this invitation because sometimes years pass before there is an affirmative response. Kids Space Group invites children and teens to attend but without the support of the volunteers (churched and non-churched) there would be no opportunity for invitations to meet Jesus. God is good. He listens and he cares. He wants to change lives including those of us who already walk with him.

Kids Space Group, after years of affiliation with the Cariboo Presbyterian Church, has realigned with Youth for Christ. There is the potential for expanded programs and youth leaders with this new association. On behalf of Kids Space Group I wish to thank the church for their support.

Due to unforeseen reasons Bill and I retired from Kids Space Group in December. Our joy in working with the children, parents and volunteers is immeasurable. We wish to thank all of them for their patience, kindness and love.

*(Editor's Note: As our readers know the Kids' Space Group has now become a ministry of Youth for Christ. We asked Elaine for a brief report here about their ministry during 2015 when they were still affiliated with the Cariboo Presbyterian Church and she graciously sent one. We have been privileged*

to support this ministry and see it grow over the last several years. We wish them God's rich blessings as they become a ministry of Youth for Christ.)

**World Vision Report: Jackie Wilcox**

A Big Thank You to everyone who contributed to the ongoing support of our four Cariboo Presbyterian Church World Vision kids. They are Yandri, a 6 yr. old boy in the Dominican Republic; Ferdus, a 15 yr. old boy in Bangladesh; Aguilar, an 8 yr. old girl in Ecuador; and Rong Xiu, a 12 yr. old girl in China.

Our bankbook summary for this ministry is as follows:

January 2015 beginning balance..... \$2,032.98  
Dec. 31, 2015 account balance..... \$2,011.48

We contribute \$156.00 per month for a total of \$1,872.00 for the year.

Please keep these kids and their families and villages in your prayers. Thank you again for your steady support!

**The Widow's Mite: Shannon Bell-Wyminga**

In our circle in Quesnel, we have been studying the stories of women in the Bible. This week we'll look at the story of the widow who drops her two small coins into the temple treasury while Jesus looks on. It will be an interesting discussion within our group as I believe our members will identify with that widow. They are all single women older than I am who strive month to month to make ends meet. They support family members, raise grandchildren and great-grandchildren on meager incomes. I have never lived as close to the edge as they have and so together we will explore what it

means to 'give everything she had to live on' (Mark 12:41-44).

I know that many of you know just what that is like – to give even when you don't know how the month will end. As I go through the lists of our supporters – both those in the congregation and our friends and congregations throughout BC and Canada – I see those who are so committed to this mission and that you give generously and cheerfully. It is humbling for us who are giving our lives to share the gospel with the scattered people of the Cariboo. We thank you sincerely.

This has been a challenging year in many ways and our finances are not immune. Our support from our friends and congregations outside the Cariboo has been much less than in previous years leaving us with a substantial gap. At the same time the tithes and offerings from those within the congregation met our target for this year. I know that everyone is feeling the pressure of the loss of church members and friends and limited resources as our church family in many places ages. Our own Presbytery sadly had to close two of our supportive congregations in the past year. At the same time I'm amazed at those who are still able to give to us in love in spite of the challenges. Thank you to all of you who share the passion of seeing the love of Christ shared with those beyond the reach of the traditional church and make it possible for us to continue. We enter 2016 in faith that God will provide all our needs so that the gospel presence in our communities will thrive.

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## **Some Announcements**

### **The Nazko and Friends Arts and Music Festival**

Saturday, February 27, 2016

2:00 to 9:30 pm

At the Nazko Valley Community Centre

This special event will profile the visual and performing artists of the Nazko valley along with some of Nazko's friends. Visual arts displays can be viewed from 2:00 to 6:00 pm. There will be a food concession from 2:00 to 7:00 pm. Then the event will conclude with a concert of performing artists from 7:00 to 9:30 pm. Come on out and enjoy yourselves.

### **The Next Annual House Church Rendezvous**

Our next house church *Rendezvous* will take place on Saturday, June 18 and will be hosted by the MacAlister-McLeeese Lake House Church. Please set the date aside and we will keep you posted about plans and developments.