



Update on Envision

January 2023

Envisioning what God can do in Whatcom County

Vol. 21 No. 1

The Mission of Envision is to:

- build authentic community by:
 - proclaiming the gospel
 - and making disciples of Jesus Christ
- in Whatcom County
- especially through Summit discipleship houses
- as a church missionary effort working in conjunction with local churches.

(Goals/Values and Budget Report Available Upon Request)

Envision Mission
710 E. Sunset
Bellingham, WA
98225

Office Phone:
(360) 392-0289

E-mail:
mitchsenti@
hotmail.com

Website:
www.envision
mission.org

The Senti's blog is also on our website

www.envisionmission.org/senti

Faithfulness of God and Faithfulness to God

We celebrate 21 years of God's faithfulness to Envision! And we are so excited to see what He will do with this coming year also. Before we share on the vision and goals for 2024 we need to evaluate how 2023 went. Our goals for 2023 were:

- 1- To start another Summit house
- 2- To have Summit house residents lead Jesus Studies and help with street nights
- 3- To infuse a culture of Truth in staff, residents and discipleship partners

Well, we planned to start another Summit house this summer but God in His sovereignty had us delay that for one year. We wouldn't have had enough folks from the Lighthouse mission to make that work yet and we had just started a ladies house at the end of 2022, so we really believe that His timing has been best.

Both Mark Tarbell and Jamey Smith have started leading Bible studies this year and many of our guests have joined us on street night. Our friends Aleta and Amber even started an outreach on street night to ladies called the "Pink Bucket ladies".

We really sought to foster a culture of truth on our staff with vulnerability in our meetings, with our guests and with one another. We've even tried to be truthful with this newsletter, trying to show that the outcomes don't always end up the way we think they will. Our retreat also focused on this theme and proved very effective for all involved.

We will share our future vision and goals for this year in the next newsletter, but **overall we are thankful for God's faithfulness** and pray that we can be faithful to Him also.

We look forward to a **Celebration of Completion for four of our guests from the Summit houses on January 20 at Hope in Christ Church at 7pm.** Rochelle and Mitchell will share some music from their latest CD/album called "Shorts" and we'll give a short update on Envision as well. Please join us!

If you missed our addiction training from October here is the website link:
<https://envisionthesummit.org/blog/addiction-training>

We want to share the metamorphosis of Envision over the years as well. It started as a street ministry, then became a coffeehouse ministry, transitioned into a mission church that met on Sunday nights and did outreach into downtown to make disciples of Jesus in the downtown culture. As we worked with largely homeless folks we realized the need for discipleship housing and that has morphed into a focus on Summit houses. With three houses started and a fourth on the way we are seeing more financial need for the first time since the coffeehouse had to close. We're thankful for the Summit thrift store downtown Lynden which should produce income in 2024, but we want supporters to be aware that the need for monthly financial support is still very much there. **Thank you for your prayers and we are confident of God's faithfulness to provide for the future.**

Board:
Elder/Pastors:
Mitchell Senti, Ben
deRegt

Treasurer/Elder: Dan
Obbink

Advisory Deacon:
Rustin Polinder

Bookkeeper: Karen
Kooistra

“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.”
Ephesians 3:20-21

We appreciate your generosity so much! (Mitchell doesn't see how much each of you gives, but he sees who gives.)

If you'd like to make a donation, please send checks to: Envision Mission, 710 E. Sunset, Bellingham, WA 98225

Our vision: to seek the face of Jesus!



On street nights in December we've been singing Christmas carols for the folks at Base Camp and on the streets. An older man in a corvette prayed with us, needing healing and connection to the Body of Christ. The youth group from 1st Reformed joined us recently. **Pray that the people we meet will connect with Christ and His Body.**

Here's a reflection from one of our staff, Aaron Speyer, from his monthly report to Mitchell and the Board as he shares about the coming of cold weather as a time of difficult change:

This is uniquely true for those experiencing homelessness on the street, living in vehicles, in the woods. There's an undeniable threat with darkening days, cooler weather and the inevitable storm or two that blows in, anticipated, but unpleasant, and a harbinger of months of threatening weather to come. Nomadic

like survival thinking takes precedence, fear and pain increase while hope diminishes.

I share this observation from working for years with people coming into services directly from the street. When operating out of a survival mind one does not have the mental, holistic and relational capacities, resources or abilities to change, let alone, to think about their thinking, they're literally just surviving, attempting to get their basic needs met. Though by observation, folks in survival mode can appear very "busy", they are desperately "stuck".

Again, without having basic needs met, there's not enough safety, security and support to grow, change and take risks to develop new thinking, behaviors, relationships, community and spiritual development. Declaring relational bankruptcy is the final confession of homelessness.

This reflection is an important reminder as we look at the ongoing stories of our guests and where they're currently with us on their journey of recovery and faith, community and future building. What a unique opportunity they have as they learn and grown, no longer "stuck" in survival mind thinking and behavior, but set free to explore a new life, an abundant life, with Christ inviting them, always, to "Come follow".

Change is possible and it's becoming the new normal, but it doesn't come without difficulty. This leads us naturally to the most centrally important role that Summit House plays, that of discipling our guests and connecting them to Christians who will commit to discipling them as they work through the inevitable challenges of maturing in Christ and the struggles that come with leaving behind old thinking and behaviors and practicing new ones. This process of transformation is fraught with challenges and often seems too slow, messy and risky for most people within the church who are not familiar with the complicated and devastating culture our guests have escaped from and/or who themselves, have expectations or beliefs that are disconnected from their own humanness, brokenness and struggle.

Christ invites the local church to experience greater connection with our Summit House guests, and vice versa. There's a powerful quote that says, "The opposite of isolation is connection". The gift God gives us is relationships. It's also true that relationships are the thing that have caused us the most injury as well as the most healing. Therefore, as we seek to speak the truth in love to both our guests and to those in the church, it would be essential for us to tell it like it is, to communicate that becoming vulnerable will be essential to establishing an authentic, trusting and loving commitment to one another, of intimacy and shared confession.