



Update on Envision

February 2024

Envisioning what God can do in Whatcom County

Vol. 21 No. 2

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)

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Vision 2024

The basic theme for Envision Mission in the year 2024 will be Grace and how grace can best be implemented by the Church. Our retreat will focus on that theme too, since Jesus is full of grace and truth (truth was our theme last year). We always want to keep our focus on equipping the church rather than looking to ourselves.

Our goals for 2024 will be as follows:

- 1- To start another Summit house with Northwest Baptist Church in Bellingham
- 2- To get our guests involved in street night, helping with discipleship studies and even discipleship partnerships.
- 3- To equip the church with trainings and connecting our guests to church Bible studies and recovery groups.

We are excited to join Bethel Christian Reformed Church in Lynden in hosting a training on **Mental Illness and the Church on Saturday February 24, at 9:30am-12pm**. Our guest speaker will be Debra Ivancovich, an excellent local Christian counselor and former teacher at Trinity Western University. If you have family that has been touched by this struggle, or perhaps you'd just like to learn more on how to support those who have mental illness we welcome you to attend. We want our churches to be welcoming yet well informed on mental health in order to better love those who struggle. A free will offering will be taken for the speaker as well. Pray that God will equip all of us for this important calling.

If any of you have odd jobs that need to be done, please let us know and we can inform our guests. A financial thank you would be much appreciated as well, but not necessary. We are especially looking for ways to give our ladies work experience. A one-time opportunity would be best, and bear in mind one of our ladies has challenging health issues. Let us know if you're interested using the contact information in the left margin.

Our celebration of completing the program on the 20th of January really inspired everyone present. The Senti's shared some music and their new CD, the men shared their stories, they received certificates and prayer at the end as well with singing. **Pray that these men will move forward in their discipleship even after they move out to bigger and better things in the LORD.** We look forward to others reaching this point too, maybe even before the year's end.

One of our ladies has obtained her driving permit with the hope of also soon getting her license and a vehicle for work and appointments. For many of our guests this accomplishment is a very real turning point in their discipleship process. The Apostle Paul in his letter to the Galatians encourages them to bear one another's burdens, but he also says in the same paragraph that each should carry his own load. We call this interdependence. It is not co-dependence or independence which are both unhealthy, but a sense in which all of us help each other where we can't help ourselves but we also learn how to carry our own load where we can. This is very core to discipleship for those who've come out of addiction and/or mental illness, but it is instructive of all of us in the Body of Christ.

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“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!

Street night continues to be a place where the Gospel is proclaimed and folks in the cold are helped with basic needs. We prayed with one Lummi couple and heard their story. They were so grateful and received coats, socks, blankets and more. Outside of Basecamp another group of people fellowshiped around the Gospel with us. And once again we sang at the corner together with 15-20 folks singing God's praise. Pictured right our group sang at Basecamp with Christmas carols. We noticed more working class people who can't afford rent staying there as well. Pray for God's provision for those on the streets.



From Aaron Speyer's desk: Recently, when I asked, "Are you looking forward to the holidays?" one of our guests responded, "I'm just trying to survive them", a tangible sense of dread and foreboding in the tone of their voice. Very often, unresolved pain memories from childhood, trauma, along with experiences of separation, estrangement, poverty, uncertainty about the future, heightened anxiety, depression, resentment, desire, fear, regret inducing guilt and crushing shame, acute longing and hopelessness, hold captive countless many who feel the devastating distance between where they are, who they are, where they wish to be and who they wish they were.

(Winter) is, hands down, the most difficult... for those experiencing homelessness, individuals in mission institutions and for people living in transitional housing facilities. Over years of being close to folks from these unique cultural communities I've come to a different kind of understanding, perspective, attitude and appreciation regarding the holistic challenges the holidays present. To put it simply, I've come to acknowledge the dichotomy. The truth seems to be knit into the very fabric of our humanity, identity and divine destiny by the One who designed us to be in an intimate relationship with Him and his family.

Whether subconsciously, consciously ...our awareness is impressed upon by what's missing. There's an elevated lack of personal satisfaction, fulfillment and increased restlessness regarding our wellbeing, as well as the condition of this world. Hope itself feels threatened, held hostage by a powerful, cruel, manipulative and invisible villain. It's true that we're subjected to literal spiritual battles, they're being fought all around us... And for those who call Jesus "Lord", This villain, though invisible, has a name and he rages at the call of the King to his people, to come home, to be forgiven, to be loved, to be known, to be set... The enemy's efforts are to distract, deceive, discourage, isolate and destroy the very people our Lord came as Emmanuel, to rescue, redeem and restore to right relationship with himself.

And for those blessed to be aware of the significance of their brokenness, it can feel like we're holding in either hand, a bit of heaven and hell. In one hand, The Gospel, which illuminates the darkness..., offering true hope that no other person or power can compete with, of which, hell itself cannot extinguish, while in the other hand, what appears to be a black lump of decay, sickness, grief and despair that encapsulates the influence of evil, sin and death. This struggle portrays the battle both before us and within us. It's like the very seed of Christ, sown into the soil of our truest identity is crying out from the darkness of germination, striving to break free from the oppression of a shadowy existence, to be liberated, brought into the light, nourished by the Son, cleansed through baptism and intended, with all fullness to grow and bear everlasting fruit, giving honor and glory to God while satisfying the deepest desires of our heart and offering testimony to those with eyes to see and ears to hear.

