



Update on Envision

March 2024

Envisioning what God can do in Whatcom County

Vol. 21 No. 3

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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Praise God for His Grace

Thank you to all who came to Bethel Christian Reformed Church in Lynden for our **training on Mental Illness and the Church on Saturday February 24, at 9:30am-12pm!**. Our guest speaker was Debra Ivancovich, an excellent local Christian counselor and former teacher at Trinity Western University. Praise God that He used it to grow us in awareness and grace for those with these struggles.

With our **theme for Envision Mission in the year 2024 being grace**, we appreciate the grace for our last newsletter hiccup. And thank you to those who expressed interest in giving our ladies odd jobs that need to be done. You've gone above and beyond what we'd hoped.

Street night is still going strong with volunteers going out each Tuesday in groups of two or three. 1st Reformed Youth Group joined us again on February 20 and other groups have done so as well for orientation on the 3rd Tuesday of the month. Sometimes there's only 4 or 5 folks, but most of the time there are many more—sometimes up to 30. This past Tuesday two of our team members handed out many Bibles and prayed with people frequently. The Gospel goes out along with socks and items for cold weather living. **Keep our friends without housing in prayer--especially that they'd take the next step and go to Base Camp so we can see them someday graduate from the Lighthouse Mission programs and come to one of the Summit houses**, that they'd come to know Jesus and all that He has prepared in advance for them to do.

We need more volunteers for the Summit Thrift Store. Let us know if you're interested or go on in to the store and ask to be put on the schedule. Keep your eyes and ears open also for the next training and the next celebration of completing the program for the ladies. Here is the audio for our celebration of completing the program on the 20th of January:

<https://envisionthesummit.org/blog/celebration-of-completion-2024>

Here's an interview of Michael McConnell, a recent completer of the program and resident of the 2nd Church house by Miles Davis, his house director.

Q: If you could tell the church one thing about Summit House, what would it be?

A: That it works. It's not like other programs, it's almost not even a program. It's more like accountability. I mean, you'll get out of it what you put into it, and the staff help you put into it.

Q: If you could tell someone who's applying for The Summit House, what would it be?

A: The same thing, that you get out of it what you put into it. There're enough program-like things out there, but here you got to want it. If you don't, you won't get much of anything from it.

Here are some further thoughts from Miles:

Often the thing our guests struggle with the most is coming from a place with a lot of structure, like the Lighthouse Mission, and suddenly becoming responsible for building and maintaining their own structure. Beyond engaging with Discipleship Partners, active involvement in church, and the occasional class, The Summit House Program has few requirements. We

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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!

maintain a light hand on most aspect of our guests' lives. Michael proves out this approach, as he has successfully managed all manner of tasks; from finding work, arranging for health care, and completing all the paperwork federal and state bureaucracies can muster. He's managed to do all this while growing closer to God and cultivating meaningful relationships in his home church and our own.

It's one thing to focus on the checklist of things that need to be done to achieve a goal, but another to understand why you have that goal. When we tell our brothers and sisters about going to church, we explain that we aren't looking for the former. That is, we aren't looking for them to treat church like another thing on the proverbial checklist. Grab a bulletin, sing some songs, listen to the message, go back in a week: if that's all you're putting into church, that's all you'll get out of it. Michael shows his involvement with church extends beyond the same old routine when he goes to see his friend at Woods Coffee, or when he has a problem with his truck, and after trying to fix it, it he calls another friend to ask for a hand. Michael has real relationships with brothers at his home church, and our own Second Family; and he has them because he sought them out.

This isn't meant to be a puff piece on Michael O'Connell. In fact, I'm sure he'd be the first to tell you he doesn't have everything figured out! Yet that doesn't take away from the work God has been doing in his life. This work is made possible by the support Second CRC gives, and I only include the financial aid as a small part, when I say that. The number of cards, quilts, drop-off pies, in-home lunches, coffee runs, car maintenance assists, phone calls, texts—I could go on! Yet even those only serve to demonstrate the core of the support I'm referring to. **The love of Christ has been shown repeatedly and abundantly to each man** who's entered our program, and it is precisely that love that continues to make all the difference. Michael was right, there are “enough program-like things out there” that seek to help folks from a disenfranchised context. But what's missing in those programs is what makes The Summit House so special: the family of God. (Michael is pictured left below with Jamey and Randy standing next to him respectively from left to right.)

