



Church Family

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us."

These are some of the last words Jesus spoke before He heroically and humbly endured the agony of the Cross for the sake of His Creation, for us. In this prayer, we see the Heart of our King. His praying desire, his dying wish, is that we would be one together with each other and Him. I mean, what Father wouldn't want His children to love each other and get along? - We aim to fulfill that desire of His Heart and to be the answer to that prayer.

As most of you know, about two years ago a group of followers of Christ here on Pine Ridge began meeting once a week to pray together and bombard the Throne Room of God. We all recognized that what we were doing in ministry was not bearing the fruit we desired and that if anything Divine was ever to happen here in Lakota Country it was going to begin with us on our knees together in fasting and intercession. Those meetings are now held twice a week and have produced a true family of believers who do not hold tightly to denominations or reputation. Through the Spirit of God we have laid aside our egos and divisive hang-ups to bow together at the Feet of Jesus to say, "Come Lord Jesus, Come."

From these prayer meetings, the Unity service has been birthed. This past January, we held our first ever Sunday Morning Unity Service. We rented a gym in the Pine Ridge community and invited all the churches, ministries and Christians from across the Lakota Nation to come and worship together under the banner of Jesus. At least eight different churches sacrificed their own Sunday morning services to worship together, and over 200 people attended. It was a mighty victory for the Kingdom of God. The entire service was led by our Native Brothers and Sisters as we rejoiced as one body to celebrate the Name of Jesus. April 24th, we held our second Unity Service with the spiritually discerned focus on reconciliation. The Spirit is moving in Lakota Country!



Also as a result from our prayer meetings and another way in which the prayer of Jesus is being answered is that in January 2017, a group of Brothers from Pine Ridge, including myself, will travel to Germany to minister in the refugee camps. Our objective is to be spiritually led as we share the Gospel with those who are hurting and in need of Hope. As we minister alongside our German brothers and Sisters, we expect the Spirit to strengthen our unity and to make us more like Him, bringing glory to His name.

We want to be the answer to Jesus' prayer. We want to be one as He and the Father are one. Unified in our ministry team here at the Rec Center, unified together with our fellow Brothers and Sisters across the reservation, unified with you and all our Christian family around the world, and - most importantly - unified with Him through His Redemption and the Holy Spirit. Because when we are one, as Jesus says, "the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me" (John 17:21). We do want the world to know Him and His Love, don't we? Then it is time that we take to heart and do what our Brother Paul asks us to do, "endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3).

We love you guys and appreciate you greatly. Please continue to pray for us as we pray for you.

Sincerely in Jesus, Pastor **Eric & Ela** Sutton

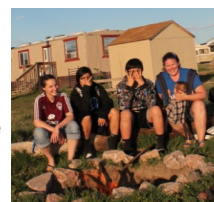
Youth Ministry

This past school year we saw significant steps taken in gaining ground for Jesus in the lives of our youth. Mary's Teen Bible Study has grown in numbers and also spiritually deeper as the teenagers did the Alpha Course together. Especially during the sessions about the Holy Spirit the teens definitely had an encounter with the Living God! Leon had the privilege to help disciple a couple young men; one of them just got baptized at our church. We are thankful and excited that we were able to plant seeds all winter; please pray with us they will take root this spring.



In March, we took a group of 21 youth to Dare2Share again. Personally I, Leon, felt that last year's conference was better, but thankfully God is not bound to my opinion! ☺ When we asked the teens to share their impressions on the last day, one of the young men said he got more out of it this time than the year before. God can and will find ways to speak to us so we can hear!

With planting and growth comes the responsibility to care and nourish, so we are looking for meaningful ways to stay in touch with our youth over the summer. Please pray for wisdom and the continued opportunity to reach out.



Leon & Mary Schwartz, Youth Leaders

Kids' Church

For several weeks Terry and I have been teaching on making good choices. It is not always obvious that the children are learning.

One particular little girl always seems to be the center of the Saturday night sleep over drama. She hits, pinches, calls kids ugly names, and will run the bikes into them. Not seriously harming anyone, just enough to make them tell on her. She gets very angry, pouts and denies she did anything wrong when you even try to correct her. I explained to her how she was making a bad choice by hurting her friends. After several incidents and insincere apologies, I asked her, "Do you love Jesus?" She answered, "Yes, I love Jesus." "Then what would Jesus want you to do?" I insisted she give her friend a hug and tell her she loved her. Her friend looked at her and answered, "I'm sorry, and I love you." As they stood hugging each other, I could see from the smile on their faces they recognized good choices sure hurt a lot less than bad choices. Later in the week another child came up to me to tell me that same child had said something mean to her and it hurt her feelings. She said, "It's okay though, I just walked away, and when she saw how upset I was she came over, apologized and gave me a big hug, told me she loved me and that she was really sorry."



Thank you for praying with us that God's Word will transform these children's lives!

Terry & Kathy Michels, Children's Pastors



Royal Rangers

We worked on camping chairs and handmade vase holders for the Ranger boys' grandmas. The kids learned to use several tools and are excited about our next big project, the making of soap box cars which we will use in a race this summer. We also had two house-camps and plan two summer camps in the Black Hills.

In the spiritual lessons we have had our focus on living the full life Jesus promised us—in contrast to being zombies. We taught the boys about life's purpose, and the Bible studies really led to some good interaction with the kids. It was also great to see that attendance has been steady with about 12-15 boys.

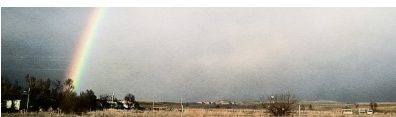
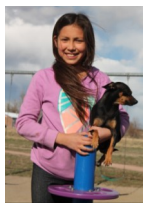


Heidi's Notes

A few day ago one of the teenagers told me she was getting another tattoo... her seventh one! I always tell her that she looks beautiful just the way she is, so my response to her was, "Don't do it, girl!" How she responded exemplifies the pain that many of our teens deal with. She said, "It's either that or cut myself, I need to have some kind of physical pain to make me feel better." I told her those are not the only options, we have talked about it many times before. She knows the truth that she can find hope through Jesus but she seeks it out and then runs from it once again. To me it makes perfect sense because I've experienced it. I know it is a hard concept to grasp for a teen that has so much pain and many struggles. It is very hard to trust in God who can't be seen, touched, smelled... texted, facebooked or tweeted. So though I get impatient to see her grow in her faith, I also know that it is the Holy Spirit working in her to complete what He wants for her life. My job is to give account of the hope that is in me (1 Peter 3:15), pray and trust God to do what He says He will do. And praise God He will do it!

Heidi Martin

Review in Pictures



BULLETIN BOARD



CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

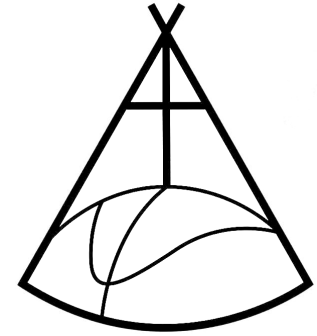
Finally, here it is—our new Rec ministry team picture. One significant addition to last year: Ela Sutton joined the team. Thank you for praying with us; the couple is reunited home in Oglala.



Another welcome addition to our ministry is the new church van which we were able to purchase in March. Taking kids home after Bible study, picking families up for church, and of course the upcoming summer swim trips are so much easier this way!

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ♥ Please join us in prayer for all the different churches and ministries on the reservation that we would continue to surrender in unity to our common head, Jesus Christ
- ♥ For the Rec ministry team that the unity in the Body of Christ would start in and with us
- ♥ For the spiritual seeds that were planted during our weekly ministry outreaches that the Holy Spirit would water and nourish them and that God's Word would visibly start to transform the children's and teens' lives
- ♥ For the upcoming summer season with all its extra activities and ministry opportunities for vision, strength, wisdom, resources, passion
- ♥ For new staff for our ministry; we especially need help with maintenance and open gym



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