



We had a good time with Diane's family in California last August, as a celebration of our 45th wedding anniversary and 40 years of ministry with NAIM. It was the first time in 15 years we were all together. It was great to have the cousins get to know each other. **So Glad we did it last year!!**

During this shutdown, we are all working from home: Us in the ministry, Rebecca in her new job with the Vancouver Whitecaps Soccer team, and Nathan, Lisa, and the grandchildren in Penticton, BC. We are all doing well and praising the Lord for His goodness to us.

Thank you for praying for us and for standing with us for 41 years! God bless you and keep you safe.

Love in Christ,

*Byron and Diane*

NAIM staff and the ministries they represent are solely funded through and fully accountable to North America Indigenous Ministries

To support this ministry financially cheques should be made to: NAIM Ministries and designated for project #475.

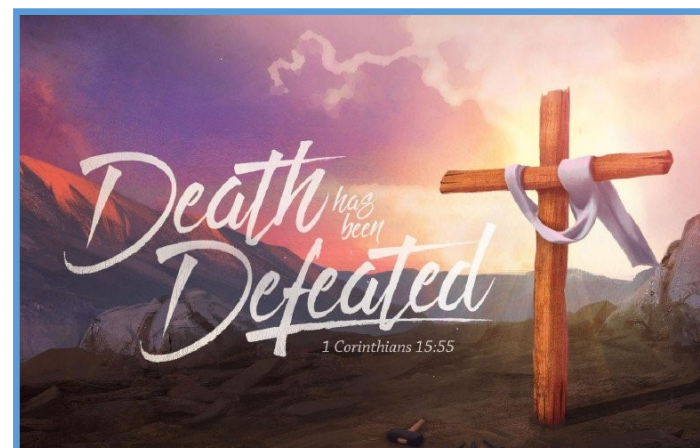
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**NAIM**  
NORTH AMERICA  
INDIGENOUS MINISTRIES

# GRANT GAZETTE

Spring

2020



The news is filled with reports of the pandemic that is spreading sickness and death all across the world. All of us are impacted with the calls to isolate at home, and maintain social distance from those we care about and love. Fear fills many hearts, but we have the great promise of our Lord Jesus Christ,

**"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."** (John 16:33)

What a glorious hope we have! He has defeated death and we can face this crisis in the world with peace, knowing He is in control! Take heart and trust in our loving Savior who gave himself for our sin. We pray that you were able to have a wonderful Resurrection celebration even without meeting together with the church family.

Over our 41 years of ministry to First Nations people in Vancouver, we have seen many paradigm shifts in the way the ministry is carried out, but this worldwide pandemic has created a massive shift in how we can share the love of the Lord Jesus Christ with the people He has called us to love and care for. As the year 2020 began, we had plans for outreach activities to present the Gospel to East Vancouver.

We were planning to take groups to the Native Christian Gathering in Kamloops, BC, the Good Friday service with our sister churches in the city, and having a First Nations Christian group, Living Stone, present a concert at our church. Plans were in process for summer ministries: Praise in the Park, camps, youth outings, and family camp. Then on March 12<sup>th</sup>, just before Spring Break, the world pressed the pause button, called COVID 19! Things came to an abrupt halt. As the youth group gathered on Friday, the 13<sup>th</sup>, the Youth Extreme team from Trinity Western University announced that this would be their last night as the school was being shut down and the students told to go home and finish the semester on line. Our youth ministry paused!



We are excited to have Andrew Matteson join the Vancouver team. Andrew is a NAIM Ministries staff, and has worked in the coastal reserve community of Klemtu for three years. He ministered to the youth of that community and served the church as pastor. He is helping us on a part time basis; advising the Trinity Western University Youth Extreme leaders and discipling the youth, helping with the SAY YES program, the food bank ministry and sharing the preaching with Byron. He will also be working with churches who want to do missions trips with their youth to minister in First Nations communities. We have prayed for a long time for workers in the city. We are thankful that he has joined the team and will be a great help.



Andrew is a graduate of the same seminary as Byron. Andrew and one of the men from Klemtu at food bank



Byron fills our van with food for the food bank at the Salvation Army. Garrett fills the truck at another Salvation Army location, The Food Bank Ministry is growing as more families are in need. Before the COVID 19 restrictions came, we were serving 50 to 60 families weekly



Vancouver Christian High School students came to serve the SAY YES! program for a week just before Spring Break in March. They were so good with the children and made a lasting impact on our group.

The SAY YES program had a very successful year that was cut short by the closure of schools in this pandemic. We are so thankful for the leadership that Eydie and Andrea have taken on, as we directed the program for 22 years. We are still involved and help 2 days a week. Eydie has set up a You Tube channel for the students to continue their learning during this time, On it they can do projects, activities and stay connected with SAY YES. We are thankful for their creativity!

Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup>, we met for service, as we are a church of about 40, and under the recommended limit of no more than 50. That night we had 45 people attend! Many of you have prayed for Glen and his battle with cancer. That evening he lead worship for the first time in a year and a half. We were so thankful to have him back! We have had to suspend all group activities at the church for the present time. That means no church services, no group Bible studies, no SAY YES!, no youth activities, no food bank, no community dinners! It could be a very discouraging situation, however, we have been studying the "Attributes of God" in our Sunday messages! He is in control and not taken by surprise by this pandemic! One of our ladies posted this on her facebook recently:



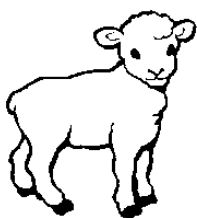
"I miss my family, I miss my friends, and I especially miss my fellowship with our church. I miss hearing our pastor giving his weekly talk on our Father God. We were learning all of God's attributes. I thought I knew God but now after several Sunday sermons I feel more connected to God than I ever did before. Now I can actually talk to him just as I converse with anyone. I realize that the Holy Spirit is living within every believer in Jesus Christ and it gives me comfort to know when I'm feeling lonely and sad like I felt yesterday. I suddenly turned my eyes toward a big picture of Jesus on my wall and suddenly I felt a moment of utter bliss and joy that I have not felt for some time. "

We are using the social media and phone to keep in touch. On Sunday, March 29, Byron did his first on line sermon from our home. He will continue to share them until we can meet together again.



## What has God done?

2019 was a challenging year in many ways. Byron did 10 funerals in the year, and attended 4 more of close friends. That is not a common experience for many, but in the First Nations community it is more the norm. Grief is difficult to resolve in the best of times, but when it is compounded by multiple losses, it is overwhelming. We are dealing with many people in grief: mothers who have lost children, young people who have overdosed and left families in devastation, and those who have had no connection to the gospel until faced with a death in their family. God has used these opportunities to allow us to share the hope and peace found in a relationship with Jesus Christ with many who would not go to a church. One of the funerals was for a good friend of almost 40 years on the reserve in North Vancouver, with over 1000 people in attendance. We pray that the seeds that we planted will continue to bear fruit in the lives of those who heard the plan of salvation.



The Lamb and Palm remind us that Jesus came to present himself as the Lamb of God who



takes away the sin of the world, and he did it on the day that the lamb was chosen for the Passover . . . Palm Sunday. The exact time he cried out, "It is finished!" was the moment those lambs were being slain for the Passover. Coincidence? No, Our God is a God of precision and detail.

It was our hope that this year would be different, but in the first 3 months Byron has officiated at 3 funerals and attended one more, 4 in 3 months! The first was a 16 year old girl who was killed in an car accident in late December. She and her sister were on their way home from visiting a relative who was in the hospital in Edmonton, Alberta, and they hit a patch of black ice and lost control of the car.

The two girls were part of our youth ministry. They had attended summer camps, and accepted Christ. She wanted to be a counselor at camp as soon as she would be eligible. These two were raised by their grandmother, who passed away in February of 2019, since then, they had been taking care of each other, now the 20 year old is left alone, with a new born to care for, born prematurely, two days before her sister's funeral!

Then on, Sunday, February 2, one of our leading church families lost their 9 day old granddaughter. We have prayed for their daughter and her partner to come to a close relationship with the Lord for several years. Their 6 year old son is part of SAY YES, and they attend special events, but have not been walking with the Lord. They are hurting from their loss, and with the isolation of sheltering at home, it is particularly hard for them. Pray they will come to a close walk with the Lord who watches over their precious little girl.

