

# Ministry Update

## September 2023

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Greetings my friends,

This has been a season of loss for many families here. Death and grieving provide the opportunity for things of normal life like work and play to stop. The family who loses their loved one consists of hundreds of people...literally. As soon as the death is announced, family members and others connected to the family start gathering around the ones most closely connected to the death. Food is brought to supply nutrition to those grieving, and so the burden of hosting and feeding the many visiting relatives and friends doesn't fall to them. There might be two or three with guitars who sing gospel songs in the hope of bringing comfort. Those who wish to sing can join in; many just listen in silence. Sometimes stories are told of memories of the lost one. A few are funny. Some are sad. Most are heartwarming. It's like a week-long open house where people are coming and going, bringing food, comfort, song, laughter, and love.

These days of being surrounded by family and friends are a lifeline to the one who is grieving. And every single one of the visitors has been in the seat of grief to receive the support and love that they are now giving to their relative. Old resentments and feuds between families are pushed aside while love is given and received. It is truly remarkable and beautiful.

One of the recent deaths was an elder who went in for routine surgery and her heart stopped working while in recovery. She was the auntie of Agatha (the one I've been telling you about with early onset Alzheimer's), the last remaining sibling of Agatha's father. She bore two children of her own and raised 15 others. She was an amazing woman who will be greatly missed by her children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces, and nephews. I had the privilege of working with my sisters and nieces (in my First Nations family) to feed the hundreds gathered for the funeral service. It was so good to see many people I haven't seen for years. It was good to hear the many people stand up to give the family comfort through speeches and the public telling of stories of how their loved one impacted their life.



Everyone in this community is acquainted closely with grief, as it has been an underlying current throughout generations. When you enter into someone's grief with them, when you can walk alongside, when you show up, there is something beautiful that happens. The grieving ones are seen. Their cries are heard. Their pain is acknowledged. Isn't that what Christ does for us? He attends us in our grief and heartache. We can rest and be taken care of because he sees us, he hears us, he says, "I know your pain."

**"...a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief."**

### **Isaiah 53:3**

Because grief is too looming to deal with by oneself.

The cooking class that I'm teaching has taken a break for the summer and my next slot is October 27 (September the kids—and me!—are going to learn how to make sushi from someone else in the community). The two classes that I've done have been well-received and many of the kids came back for round two. A bunch of the youth have graduated from high school, so I don't know

if they'll come back in the fall, but we will continue on with the younger ones.

- ⇒ **Menu for May:** Tomato-Basil pasta sauce, Caesar salad, garlic bread, chocolate chip cookies.
- ⇒ **Menu for June:** Beef sliders 3 Ways: 1) Classic American Burger, 2) Italian Beef Sliders, 3) Blue Cheese and Onion Jam
- ⇒ **Proposed Menu for October:** Indian Fish Tacos (breaded cod, coleslaw, spicy garlic aioli and fresh tomato salsa on frybread. Mmmmmmmmm.....

Please pray with me as I continue to:

- ◆ invite people to join me in church,
- ◆ receive prayer requests every Friday via Facebook from people who in humility, tell me of their need for comfort, help in addictions, help in relational difficulties, freedom from pain,
- ◆ visit and comfort dear Agatha as her early onset Alzheimer's progresses,
- ◆ rub shoulders with the youth toward building relationships with them.

Pray I can be salt and light here.

Blessings on you as I continue this work here. Thank you for your prayers, your finances, and your love.

Kathryn



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