

December 29, 2023



Dear Supporting Churches and Praying Friends,

Praise the Lord for the gift of His Son Jesus Christ! Every year before we exchange gifts, I read the Christmas story for family devotions. This year as I read Matthew's account, the phrase "*of the Holy Ghost*" in 1:18 stood out to me. Our entire salvation depends on that phrase. Because Mary was found with child "*of the Holy Ghost*," the One born would be called Emmanuel (God with us) fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy. Jesus came, and we can be saved from our sins. What a gift—eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Homegoing—Two months ago today my father-in-law, Dan Larsen, went home to be with the Lord. He battled lung cancer for over a year, and his body showed the signs. Nevertheless, he had such peace and assurance during the ordeal. God is good. He received Christ in 2002, largely through the influence of my mother-in-law (cf. I Pet. 3:1). Cathy flew out to South Dakota and was with Dan at the end. The rest of us joined the family a little later. I had the privilege of officiating the funeral, which went very well. There were over 200 in attendance. The gospel was preached, Dan was remembered, and by God's grace, Christ was honored. Thank you so much for your prayers and encouraging words. They were very strengthening to all of us.

Visitors—Since October we have had several visitors attending our services. **Paul** was tired of the foolishness in the churches he has been a member of. He has been coming for about three months. Please pray for wisdom in dealing with him. **Eric** has come a handful of times over the last few months. Despite many attempts to contact him, he wasn't responding. After a six-week absence, he showed up again. Turns out he was checking out a few other churches in the area. "What did you think of them?" I asked. One thing he said struck me somewhat humorously. He said, "One of the pastors preaches a long time, about 30 minutes!" Mind you, I preach well over 30 minutes. I asked him, "Do I preach a long time?" He said, "Oh no." I was glad to hear that.

Vickie has been coming off and on. Cathy has had several Bible studies with her, and one of our ladies, Lorie, has been talking to her as well, helping her to understand the gospel. Last spring, I went into a shoe store to try on a pair of shoes and had a great opportunity to preach the gospel to the salesman **David**. Later, when I went back to follow up, he remembered our conversation but said he was OK. In November, while I was in South Dakota, I received a phone call—it was David. He asked if he could meet me at "my office." He knows that he is not saved and said he wants to get it settled. I have had good gospel conversations with him, but the attempts at following up are not always returned. That slows things down. Please pray for the Lord to work in his heart.

Thankful—We are so thankful for our sending church, Bethel Baptist Church, and their support of the ministry work here in Medford. Pastor Stager came up and covered for us while we were in South Dakota, and Marlowe and Becky Robles covered for us in early October as we spent time with supporting churches in South Dakota, New York, and Ontario. We are also grateful for your prayers, love, and edifying words, especially during these last couple of months. We deeply appreciate it all.

"Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think..., Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Eph. 3:20-21)

Sincerely,

Dave and Cathy Sutton
Church Planters
Medford, OR